POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

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FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

THE POLICE COUNTERMAND THE ORDER FOR BURIAL.

(See the Story of Flanagan and Higgins.)

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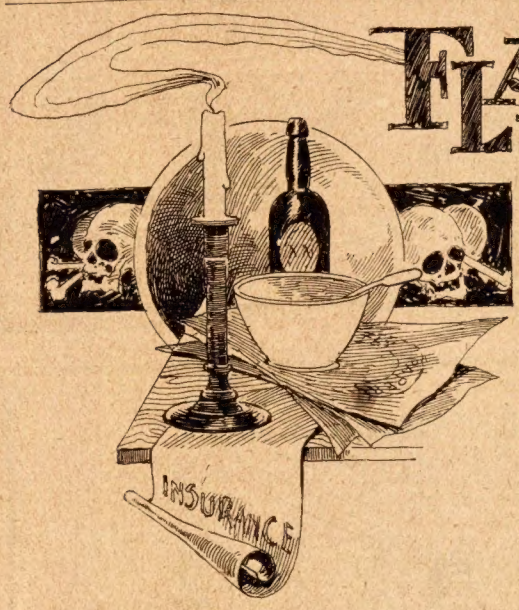

FLANAGAN & HIGGINS

A Pair of Pitiless Poisoners.

"Than these twain were ever fiends more foul?"
—GREENE, "A Love Tragedie," Act III., Sc. 2.

"CONSIDERING the relationship of the murdered man to you—to say nothing of others in whose deaths it is suggested you are implicated—the murder is a crime so horrible, carried out so cruelly, so relentlessly, and from motives so sordid, that it makes one shudder to think to what depths humanity is capable of sinking." These were the burning words addressed to two of the most heartless, most cunning, and most callous murderesses whose enormities ever stained the annals of any country by the late Justice Butt, when the convicted wretches stood before him to receive the last dread sentence of the law. Nor did this scathing denunciation of the squalid greed which urged Catherine Flanagan and Margaret Higgins to poison, by agonising degrees, the ignorant husband of the second of these baleful sisters, at all exaggerate the abominable character of their deeds and motives. They were arrested in their hideous careers of crime by an occurrence of the most casual kind—an occurrence which the success of the elder of the precious pair of harridans in defying detection in her former villainies had blinded them to the possibility of. The case possesses an importance all its own apart from the detestable details of the crimes involved, since the outcome of it was a salutary alteration in the law regulating insurance of human life, and since the evidence adduced supplied data concerning arsenical poisoning which played a momentous part in securing the conviction of a woman who was five years later found guilty of administering this same irritant with fatal consequences to the husband whom she had ceased to love. We mean Mrs. Maybrick, whose crime was less heinous only because its motive was less mercenary. But to the story of the diabolical doings of the sister-poisoners, the number of whose victims will never be revealed until the Great Day has dawned upon which the graves will give up their murdered dead.

In Skirving Street, a mean, unlovely thoroughfare in the Irish quarter of Liverpool, in the year 1880, dwelt Catherine Flanagan, the fifty-year-old widow of a dock labourer. She paid the rent of the dejected-looking house in which she lived by letting lodgings to humble compatriots, who, with characteristic clannishness, herded together in this poverty-stricken, evil-smelling neighbourhood. The Saturday-night "scenes" and orgies on and around this plague spot were disgusting beyond description. The labourers, from which class—and that the lowest—the population was drawn, received their wages an hour after noon, and straightway proceeded to dissipate their earnings in the gin-palaces in which these pestilential purlieus abounded. By the time the shades of eve had fallen all the so-called fun of a Donnybrook Fair was realistically reproduced. Men and women drank and fought and cursed and swore. Skirving Street was the unholy centre of an indescribable pandemonium.

Such were the environments of the brutalised old Irishwoman, who, nothing loth, mingled with the congenial throng in whose midst she wrought her hellish purpose—the acquisition of money, by any means, fair or foul, to indulge her appetite for "good living," with a plentiful accompaniment of strong waters. Her lodgers—poor, doomed creatures!—exchanged public-house hospitalities with her zest and gusto, little dreaming of the demon they were entertaining unawares. Her fat sides shook with laughter at the lewd banter which passed for wit in the circle in which she shone. Her snub nose, typical of her race, her gross, fresh-complexioned, freckled face, her scarred eyebrow, her pendulous ears, whose deformity was emphasised by the heavy gold rings which depended from them, her abundant crop of wavy, greying black hair, and her strong Milesian accent—these remarkable features of this bad old woman were as well known in the purlieus which she adorned as the most popular of its drinking-shops and boozing kens.

With her at this time lived, as members of the family, her son, John, a young fellow of twenty-two, who was neither better nor worse than the class of labourers to which he belonged, and her infamous sister, Margaret Thompson, a widow, of over forty years of age, who was her willing accomplice in crime. Among her lodgers were Pat Jennings, a hard-working, hard-drinking, middle-aged bricklayer, and his strapping eighteen-year-old daughter, Margaret, the former of whom had lodged with Widow Flanagan for twelve years. The intimate terms upon which landlady and lodgers lived may be gleaned from the facts that young Flanagan occupied the same bed with Pat Jennings whilst the daughter, Margaret, slept with the woman who was planning and dreaming of her destruction.

Towards the close of 1880 Mrs. Flanagan began to feel what with her stood for the pinch of poverty. Her vulgar carouses and debauches had drained her exchequer. It must be replenished, for Catherine was not of the kind to brook deprivation of her coarse pleasures. But how? She did not waste much time in meditation. Her old resource soon occurred to her alert, if gin-sodden mind. She determined to consult the insurance agent again. Her unwitting accomplice secured, she looked around and cast about for a victim. That victim must be one whose disappearance from Skirving Street society—with a small s—would excite a minimum of attention, must be one whose demise would excite no suspicion. The inhuman monster marked down her own son for death!

With fatal facility, this most unnatural of mothers effected the insurance of the life of John Flanagan for a small sum. A fortnight after the signing of the insurance proposal with Widow Flanagan's "mark," John aroused

his mate during the dark hours before the dawn, and complained of agonising pains in the abdominal region. The unfortunate fellow writhed and moaned in unendurable pain. In order that her lodger should not be further disturbed by John's complainings, Mrs. Flanagan removed her dying son to another room. In four days he breathed his last, done to death by the mother who had handed him the poisoned cup. The doctor certified death from dysentery. The corpse was duly "waked," with all the pomp and ceremony usually attendant upon these Bacchanalian orgies, and then hurried underground. The neighbours condoled with the weeping widow on the sudden cutting off in the prime of his manhood of a "broth of a boy," emptied more glasses of whisky, and then forgot all about the murdered man.

"To hell with you and your club."

The proceeds of this hideous crime rapidly went the way of all Mrs. Flanagan's ill-gotten gains. The publicans had the lion's share of John's insurance money, and the Skirving Street ghoul was once more in desperate straits. Another victim must be found for the ever-ravening maw of the fiendish Flanagan. In an evil moment for poor Margaret Jennings the choice fell upon her. Once more the ubiquitious insurance agent came unconsciously to the rescue of the cunning murderers. Margaret's life was duly "assured." The "proposal" was submitted in due form. The agent, eager for business, wrote in Flanagan's name as the "assurer," what time the woman touched the pen with her finger. Then she appended the X, the very sight of which—devout Catholic as she pretended to be—should have seared her conscience. And thus the doom of the hapless girl just passing to the early bloom of womanhood was sealed by the sign of the cross. Nine days before her untimely death she was blithe and gay and well in body and in spirits. At the close of the ninth day she followed poor John Flanagan into the Land of Silence. The medical man—a "dispensary doctor"—who attended Margaret in her last hours, saw nothing abnormal in the symptoms. The terms of the certificate were in accordance with the symptoms, and so, the incidental "wake" having been indulged in by a ring of maudlin neighbours, the murdered girl was borne amid wailing, in which Widow Flanagan joined, to her last earthly resting-place.

The murderous widow, what time she squandered her newly-acquired wealth among her admiring cronies, secretly hugged herself, congratulating herself upon her continued immunity from detection. "Easy come, easy go," is a maxim which applied very pertinently to Mrs. Flanagan's execrable earnings. When she was in a bountiful mood money did not last long in the hands of the demon of Skirving Street.

Whether or not the scene of her two crimes had become unendurable by reason of its hideous associations, whether or not the wraiths of her victims revisited the glimpses of the moon, we shall probably never know on this side of the Great Revelation. But certain it is that Mrs. Flanagan shook the dust of Skirving Street off her feet, and migrated to an equally broken-down abiding-place not many streets distant. Her new address was Latimer Street, a fitting name for the scene of the martyrdom of her two remaining victims. At this place there came to lodge with her a hod-carrier named Thomas Higgins, a man in the prime of life—he was barely forty-five, and strong and vigorous at that—and his wife. Mrs. Flanagan and her sister, Mrs. Thompson, were on terms of the closest friendship with the Higginses. Thomas's wife died suddenly. No evidence was forthcoming at the trial of the sisters to show that Mrs. Higgins Number One had succumbed to other than natural causes. But be this as it may, and leaving all sinister inferences and deductions to our readers, the fact remains that late in 1882—about Christmastide of that year—Mrs. Thompson became Mrs. Higgins Number Two, and from that event the main interest, so far as the trial and condemnation of the pair of poisoners, begins to run. The union of widower and widow was made the occasion of great jubilation in Latimer Street. There were "lashins o' whisky," and a plentiful crop of broken heads to celebrate the event. Did any guest, we wonder, note the grim and ghoulish smile which played round the mouth of Widow Flanagan, when the "bhoys" all wished him "long life and much happiness"? We wonder.

They let Pat into the secret.

Whatever doubt may have existed as to the complicity of Mrs. Thompson in the crimes laid to her charge before her marriage is entirely absent from the connection of the

second wife of Thomas Higgins with the murder of that man and his ten-year-old daughter by his former spouse. There was forthcoming confirmation strong as Holy Writ that she conspired with her devilish sister to encompass the deaths of those two victims, as the unfolding of the story of the crimes will make apparent.

Mrs. Flanagan was not a woman to let the grass grow under her feet. She lost no time in "assuring" the life of their newly-acquired relative in no fewer than five offices. The aggregate of the sums which she invested was at the trial variously stated as £92 and £108. The heartless unscrupulousness of the woman may be gathered from an incident which is not without its humorous side. She approached the agent of the Providential Assurance Company with a proposal for the insurance of her lodger, Pat Jennings, who was in complete ignorance of her intention, although he still abode beneath the roof of his daughter's murderess. The agent took the trouble in this case to look the man up, and, finding that Pat was of incurably intemperate habits, he declined the proposal. But the ever-resourceful Widow Flanagan was, as usual, equal to the occasion.

"Put in Thomas Higgins's name," said she promptly.

The agent did as he was bidden, filled in the doomed man's name, and the two sisters, neither of whom could write, affixed their "marks" to the document.

In this case the treacherous wife paid a few of the earlier premiums, the remainder being satisfied, as were most of the others demanded by other collectors, by Mrs. Flanagan. In reply to the astonished judge, the superintendent of the Scottish Legal Assurance Company told his lordship that their agents never made inquiries where the wife sought to insure her husband's life. Similar responses from other agents and collectors elicited from Justice Butt the remark, "I never heard of such a state of things in my life"—a declaration which his lordship emphasised with telling force when he came to address the jury.

These agents, with a single exception, admitted that Higgins was unaware that he was insured. One of them went further, and confessed that although he was within a few yards of the man when Mrs. Flanagan was setting her fatal "mark" to a proposal, he never dreamed of telling him that he was being insured.

The exception already alluded to was that of the collector for the Royal Liver Friendly Society, who called upon Higgins to inform him that it was proposed to insure his life with his company.

"To hell with you and your club! You'll get no money from me!" Higgins thundered, and the agent beat a hasty and undignified retreat, leaving the women to fight it out with the infuriated man, who was evidently keenly alive to the kind of wife and sister-in-law he was dealing with. That insurance was never effected. That was the last attempt made by Mrs. Flanagan and her too-pliable partner in crime to "assure" the life of Thomas Higgins. Whether or not the episode decided them to delay the despatching of the threatened man we can only guess. Anyhow, it seems certain that the heartless Latimer Street landlady was resolved to have money, and to keep her poisoning hand in at one and the same time. She achieved her double purpose in the old way, the victim this time being little Mary Higgins, the step-daughter of the younger of the brace of murderesses. The child was insured and slowly poisoned, in accordance with her aunt's most approved method. Her innocent soul was sent to accompany those of John Flanagan and Margaret Jennings. But Nemesis, velvet-footed, but sure, was on the heels of the miscreants.

The turn of the much-insured Thomas Higgins came round at last, and with his death came also the retributive justice so long delayed. The wretched hod-carrier, who drank copiously of ardent beverages to drown the sorrows of his miserable existence, was suddenly seized with a violent and mysterious illness. His condition went from bad to worse, and it was decided to remove him to a cellar in Ascot Street, a slum well within the area of the quarter which Mrs. Flanagan and her sister had polluted with their hateful presence, where he could enjoy (sic) the exclusive care and attention of his wife and sister-in-law. In this foul den Higgins endured the tortures of the damned for four or five days. Then Dr. Whitford, the medical officer for the district, was called in. He was told that the patient was a heavy drinker, and then conducted to the side of the bed which the occupant was never more to leave with life. Dr. Whitford prescribed, and Mrs. Higgins took her own bottle to the local dispensary to be filled with the necessary medicine. She bore the remedial physic home—what a home, ye irate gods!—and handed it to her impatient accomplice. Swiftly did Widow Flanagan substitute fatal doses of arsenic for the curative bismuth prescribed by the dispensary doctor.

On the 1st of October, 1883, Dr. Whitford paid his final visit to Higgins. He found the poor fellow still very ill. On the day following this visit Dr. Whitford learned with surprise from the lips of the weeping Margaret that her "pore husband" had "gone off quoite suddint in the noight."

Higgins was dead; like Marley, dead as a door-nail. Dr. Whitford certified that dysentery was the cause of dissolution. Armed with the necessary document, the wailing wife and the weeping widow put on their Sunday clothes and tearfully proceeded to draw instalments of the money for which the murdered hod-carrier's life had been assured, their great anxiety being to "bury pore Tom dacintly." Thus these women received a portion of the price of their crime. But Nemesis had them within arm's length now. The psychic moment had arrived for the happening of that casual occurrence alluded to in our opening sentences which was to bring to a tragic close the poison campaign of the two illiterate, black-hearted murderers of John Flanagan, Margaret Jennings, Mary Higgins and her father, and Heaven alone knows how many another poor suffering creature.

A boon companion of Pat Higgins, the brother of "pore Tom," and the man whose proposal the insurance agent, as in the case of that of Pat Jennings, had rejected, overtook the bibulous little shoemaker on the morning of the 3rd of October.

"So yer pore brother Tom's dead, thin, Pat," blurted out his informant.

"Dead?" echoed the startled man, who had not heard that his brother was ill. "Sure it's jokin' ye are," he went on, "an' a divil of a poor joke it is, anyhow." He was soon to learn that it was all deadly earnest.

We left poor drunken Pat Higgins wonder-struck by the news of the sudden death of his brother Tom, who, he told the judge and jury at the Assizes, had always been a strong, healthy man, "with never an illness but the lasht." Now, in moments of confidence, whilst the whisky was flowing, and the tongues of the precious brace were loosened, they had let Pat into the secret of the frequent insurance of "pore Tom." Pat's suspicion was aroused, and he forthwith determined upon a bold course. He went to Dr. Whitford and told him all he knew and suspected. The doctor sent him post-haste to the coroner's officer. The result of this interview was the countermanding of the order for the burial by the coroner. Tom's avenging brother, accompanied by a smart police-officer, conveyed the intelligence to the band of drunken hags they found weeping and slobbering over the corpse in the Ascot Street dungeon. Mrs. Flanagan was sprinkling shavings in the coffin. Mrs. Higgins was on the verge of delirium tremens. Remorse and drink had rendered her helpless. The smart police-officer took possession of a couple of medicine bottles, a mug, and a spoon, which he found lying about, and left the brutish band of harridans weeping, wailing and drinking to their hearts' content.

But events had sobered Widow Flanagan. She saw the red light. The visit of the officer of the law in the company of the murdered man's brother was sufficient warning for Catherine. She ceased from the bestrewing of the poor

corpse with shavings, and incontinently fled without bonnet to her head or shawl to her back. She sought and found refuge with a Mrs. Mackenzie, a sailor's wife, whose husband was mostly at sea, and who was wont to console herself in his protracted absence with "a little drop in a bottle." The terrified woman induced the unsuspecting Mrs. Mackenzie to go to Skirving Street, and send her daughter, Ellen, to her with a bonnet and a shawl. The perplexed child answered the summons promptly. The communication which the girl conveyed struck terror to the heart of the callous Catherine.

"Och, mother!" sobbed the child, "there's such trouble at home!"

"Why, has the clubman been?" asked the agitated woman.

"No, no, worse than that, mother," came the staggering reply; "they've taken my auntie to gaol, and they've taken my uncle's heart out, and the neighbours say you've poisoned him."

"THE NEIGHBOURS SAY YOU'VE POISONED HIM."

Then it was that Widow Flanagan felt the icy touch of the arresting hand of Nemesis. Henceforward she was to find no rest for the sole of her foot on this earth. The autopsy had convinced Dr. Whitford and his assistant that Thomas Higgins had been poisoned, slowly but surely, by small doses of arsenic repeatedly administered. The mother dismissed the child, with strict injunctions to say nothing about their interview. Commenting on the girl's report of the sort of gossip in which the neighbours were indulging, she merely said:

"I know I have done nothing of the sort. Your uncle has been drinking heavily for the last month, and I have nothing to do with it—only the club money." But for all that, she knew that her only chance of safety lay in immediate flight from beneath Mrs. Mackenzie's roof.

She acted upon her conviction, and for eleven days escaped arrest. She obtained shelter in a shabby-genteel Liverpool street known as Kensington, after explaining that she was up from the country to see a niece who was an inmate of the workhouse infirmary. Her hostess here read out to her a highly-coloured and thrillingly sensational account of "The Wholesale Poisoning Case."

"Ah," remarked the landlady sententiously, "there's a job there for Marwood's successor."

The demeanour of this lady disturbed the widow greatly. Her allusions to the hangman set Mrs. Flanagan moving again. She secured another lodgment, where she found existence even more uncomfortable. The dastardly crimes were the universal topic of the hour. The householder playfully remarked to her new lodger:

"I wonder whether you're Mrs. Flanagan?"

The widow smiled grimly at the ghastly joke, and resolved to resume her weary march. She wandered farther afield, and eventually engaged a room in the house of Mrs. McGovern, the wife of a seafaring man, in Ono Street, a mean and obscure by-way at Wavertree, a suburb of Liverpool. In Mrs. McGovern Flanagan thought she had discovered a congenial spirit. They ate and drank—especially drank—and gossiped and joked. In an unguarded moment—one of the few of such lapses, but assuredly the most fatal of them all during her wicked career—the fugitive let fall a word or two which were not lost upon the husband of Mrs. McGovern, who happened to be home from sea just then, happily for the cause of justice, however unfortunate the fact may have been for the wholesale poisoner. The name of their informant was never publicly revealed, but, acting "upon information received," a stern-faced inspector knocked with a rat-tat which spelt death for Mrs. Flanagan, was admitted to the McGovern ménage, and came upon the landlady and the criminal, upon whose trail the detective force had been for nearly a fortnight, at supper. They were thoroughly enjoying a meal of potatoes—the national dish of both ladies—and washing the tubers down with copious draughts of beer. It needed not the explanation of the inspector to convey to the woman who had been hunted down at last what had happened. She

listened to the terrible accusation in calm silence, and then gave utterance to the following infamous lie:

"I never knew anything about it. I never did it, and I know nobody else that did."

That night the two crime-stained widows slept beneath the roof of the Liverpool Bridewell, and—who knows?—suffered in dreams the agony of the fate which they knew awaited them in the waking world.

Whilst Flanagan had been playing a futile game of hide-and-seek at the expense of the sleuth-hounds of the law, Dr. Whitford and his assistants had been busy. The discovery made in the case of Thomas Higgins, when brought into bolder relief by the story of the five insurance policies, put the police on their mettle. The agency employed to destroy the life of the poor hod-carrier and the motive for

THE ARREST OF FLANAGAN.

his destruction set the bloodhounds of Dale Street—the detective headquarters in Liverpool—upon the trail. Orders for the exhumation of the bodies of John Flanagan, Margaret Jennings, and Mary Higgins were at once issued and executed. The bodies were identified, and the analysts, medical experts, and insurance agents did the rest.

When they were put upon their trial Liverpool was agog with excitement. A strong force of police was necessary to restrain the angry crowds which surged round the noble building, St. George's Hall, in which they were arraigned. The greatest vigilance had to be exercised to prevent an attack upon the van which conveyed the wretched women to and from the Bridewell. During three days throngs of indignant citizens awaited the verdict, about which there was no manner of doubt. There was a marked difference in the demeanour of the culprits as they faced the judge. Flanagan, pale and impassive, cast occasional contemptuous glances round the court. The younger of the two—the perfidious murderess of her husband—seemed all through the ordeal to be on the verge of a hysterical outbreak. Both women pleaded "Not Guilty," Flanagan in a defiant tone, Higgins in a low, trembling voice.

Mr. McConnell, the present Chairman of the London Sessions, and Mr. Pickford conducted the case for the Crown. With inexorable lucidity the whole of the horrible details of the heartless crimes were elicited. The facts already set before our readers were marshalled with irresistible force. The testimony of the dead man's brother, Pat Higgins, of Pat Jennings, the father of poor poisoned Margaret, of the insurance agents, and of the medical experts was crushing in its demonstration of the guilt of the inhuman monsters who sat side by side, without ever exchanging a glance, in the dock which they were to leave for the gallows.

The description of the interview with her iniquitous mother, as it fell from the faltering lips of little Ellen Flanagan, thrilled the listening assembly. The only exhibition of emotion on the part of the elder prisoner throughout the whole proceedings was observable when this child entered the witness-box. As the girl proceeded with her damning testimony, the guilty mother winced and shuddered and averted her eyes.

The sensation of the hearing was, however, supplied by the middle-aged wife of one Peter Manville, the only eye-witness of the actual death of Thomas Higgins. Flanagan was present; but she slept whilst her victim was in the death agony. The simple directness of the harrowing story told by Elizabeth Manville carried inevitable conviction to the minds of those who listened, awe-struck, to the recountal. The witness was a plain-spoken, workaday, matter-of-fact representative of her class. The very indifference with which she recited facts which made the hearers' blood boil lent the most painful dramatic effect to her rehearsal of the incidents.

Elizabeth Manville lived at 25, Ascot Street, next door

to the house in which Thomas Higgins was poisoned. She had noticed that the man looked very ill when she saw him sitting on the steps which led to the cellar in which he met his cruel fate. He moaned and writhed in evident pain. On the 1st of October Mrs. Manville, not having seen Higgins out and about as usual, asked Flanagan how he was.

"You'd better come in and see," said Mrs. Flanagan, who had known Manville for twenty years. "He is ill with diarrhœa."

Mrs. Manville did as she was requested, and upon entering the cellar found Higgins "in agony, moaning and working his hands against the wall." Mrs. Higgins and Ellen Flanagan were present. They did not, however, remain long, and neither they nor Mrs. Flanagan betrayed any particular signs of distress at the condition of the man on the bed. They set out for Latimer Street, and left Mrs. Flanagan and Mrs. Manville in charge of Higgins for the night. The hours of darkness rolled on and Higgins asked for a drink. Mrs. Flanagan handed him "a spoonful of something which she took from a mug on the mantelpiece." The dying man pushed her from him, and cried, "Take it away! take it away!" Then he turned his head to the wall, moaning and groaning all the while. An hour after midnight the hapless being asked to be lifted up. Mrs. Flanagan complied with the request.

The exertion seems to have overwhelmed the wretch, for she fell asleep in her chair shortly after. Think of it! "Fell asleep!" The dying man then struggled hard, and finally raised himself on his elbow. Then he whispered:

"For God's sake give me a drink!"

Mrs. Manville handed him a cup of water. He drank, and, handing back the vessel, murmured:

"God bless you!" They were the last words Thomas Higgins ever spoke on earth. He died with the blessing on his lips.

Mrs. Manville saw his head slip from the pillow, as he fell back after drinking. She aroused Mrs. Flanagan in alarm. She said, pointing to the bed:

"He is dead!"

The newly-awakened woman arose, went to the bedside, looked at Higgins, and then, turning angrily upon Manville, said:

"Sit down and mind your own business, and let him die in peace." But, as Manville told the judge and jury, "The poor man was dead already." Mrs. Flanagan stood by the bed a few minutes, assured herself that the poison had really done its deadly work, and then she calmly closed and locked the door of the cellar, where lay the last of her victims, with never a soul to close his lustreless eyes, and betook herself to her home in Latimer Street, there to report to her less daring accomplice the success of their devilish designs. Have the realms of Fact and Fiction combined a more heartless crime to show?

All doubt had been removed as to the facts—(1) that Thomas Higgins was poisoned by means of arsenite of soda; (2) that the poison was administered by Catherine Flanagan and Margaret Higgins from time to time in small doses; and (3) that the motive for the murder was the acquisition of the money for which the women had insured their victim's life.

But where had the women obtained the arsenite of soda from, traces of which had been found in the bodies of all four of their victims, in the bottles, in the mug, and in the spoon removed by the police from the Ascot Street cellar, and in the pocket of Mrs. Higgins on the day of her arrest? In this pocket, which played an important part in fastening the guilt upon the dead man's wife, as well as upon her sister, were found particles of "fluff and dust," which, upon being analysed, were found to contain arsenic. The pocket was boiled, and in the water the toxicological experts detected unmistakable traces of arsenic. But the mystery of the origin of the deadly poison remained unsolved until the famous Dr. Campbell Brown bethought himself of the solution in which the ordinary fly-papers of commerce were soaked. That eminent authority set to work to analyse fly-papers of Liverpool and Manchester manufacture respectively, and soon proved beyond cavil that in each case one of the constituent parts of the solution was arsenite of soda. The recent revival of the public interest in the Maybrick case will have brought back vividly the part which these same fly-papers played in establishing the charge against the prisoner who has just been released upon licence. Anyhow, the testimony of Dr. Campbell Brown forged the missing link in the chain of evidence which dragged Catherine Flanagan and Margaret Higgins to the ignominious doom they so persistently courted. It is noteworthy that the poison-laden documents manipulated by these ghouls of women were known and sold as "The Infallible Fly-Papers," and huge quantities of them were daily disposed of. That they were infallible in at least one respect the dead bodies of John Flanagan, Margaret Jennings, Mary Higgins, and Thomas Higgins abundantly proved.

"Take it away! Take it away!"

Mr. Shee made a gallant fight against overwhelming testimony for the worthless lives of the wholesale poisoners.

But his eloquent and skilful advocacy was all in vain. The testimony adduced by the Crown shattered his ingenious theories to atoms. The prosecution had not left a loophole through which a mouse could have crawled. The mills of the Lord had ground so exceeding small that escape for the wretches who had imperilled their immortal souls for pelf was cut off in every direction.

After an absence of fifty minutes—the delay and hesitation can only be interpreted as concessions to the prejudice against indecent haste upon such solemn occasions—the jury returned to their places in the hushed and awe-stricken court, and delivered the only verdict possible among reasoning and reasonable men.

Assuming the dread headgear, Justice Butt, with deep emotion, pronounced the doom of the guilty women. Addressing them in the solemn words with which this sketch opens, his lordship proceeded:

"Wicked and cruel and debased as you are, I do not forget that you still are human creatures. One thing you

have in common with us all—the hope of an existence hereafter. It is the only hope you have left now. I trust that that hope may be some alleviation to your sufferings during the short time you have yet to live."

Then followed the words which no human being can listen to without a shuddering regret for the inhumanity which calls for their utterance. At the close of his lordship's speech Higgins cried, "Oh!" in an agonised voice, threw up her hands, and swooned in the arms of her gaoler. Her evil genius, Flanagan, leered round the court, turned on her heel, and walked steadily and deliberately down the steps, callous to the last.

This verdict obtained, the Crown saw no useful purpose to be served by prosecuting the prisoners for the murders of their other victims. The evidence adduced was all-sufficient.

In the course of his powerful address to the jury, his lordship animadverted severely upon the loose and reckless way in which the law allowed persons to insure others without either their sanction or knowledge. Commenting on the evidence given by the agents and collectors, he said sternly:

"This is a vicious system under any circumstances. Unless the proceedings of these companies are placed upon a sounder basis, great danger must result. It makes one ask the question how many people there may be at this moment lying in the burial-grounds of this and other large towns, who, if their lives had not been insured, might be living in our midst to-day?"

This weighty pronouncement had the desired effect, and, as our readers are aware, resulted in a salutary amendment of the law.

Sentenced on the 18th day of February, 1884, after a sensational trial, which lasted three days, the execution was fixed for the 3rd day of March following.

There was a lingering reminder of departing winter in the icy blast which ushered in the last morning this pair of pitiless poisoners were to know on earth. In penitent mood the miserable sinners submitted themselves to be pinioned, Flanagan by Binns, and Higgins by his assistant, Samuel Heath, of Dewsbury. Both women were in a state of utter collapse when the foot of the scaffold was reached. The bleak wind of March made them tremble and shiver. In a semi-conscious condition the two malefactors were assisted to mount the steps. With merciful expeditiousness, they were placed side by side upon the trap-door. They dared not look into each other's eyes. In an instant the bolt was drawn, and the sin-laden souls of the cruel murderesses were sent to their last account. It was said that the wretches made oral confessions. It will be remembered that neither of them could write. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that, whatever admissions were made, they never reached the knowledge of the public. It is probable that they were made to the priest, Father Bonté, who was tireless in his ministration to their spiritual requirements and welfare. So far, at all events, as the world which they so foully polluted is concerned, the secret of the actual extent of their enormities died with the wretched women on that snowy morning in March.

A PARISIAN street-thief, who was caught in the act of stealing from the shop of a tobacconist in the Rue de Rivoli, said, by way of excusing himself, that he never knew that it was against the law to take snuff.

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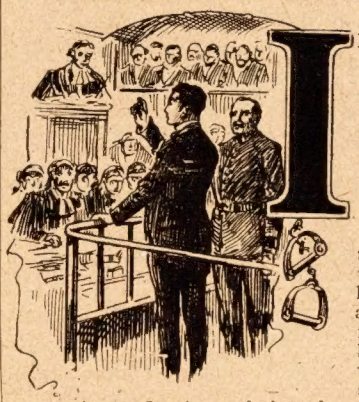
"WHY SENTENCE OF DEATH—?"



IN an early issue of FAMOUS CRIMES we gave an authentic account of the last dying words of certain great criminals, spoken as they stood on the scaffold face to face with Death.

To this we may add a companion picture recording the utterances of well-known murderers when asked, in the customary form of speech, if they had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon them. In the majority of cases the convicted man has generally taken refuge in silence. He feels that for him all hope is gone, that the verdict is unalterable, and that nothing he can now advance can possibly induce the jury to believe his protestations of innocence.

Other murderers—and especially the less educated ones—have been much more garrulous. The educated man—of the Lamson and Staunton type—shrinks from the stern gaze of the judge and inarticulately murmurs that the verdict is a wrong one. Beyond that he has nothing to say, and is silent even after the dread sentence has been pronounced and he knows that his life is forfeit to the law.

Percy Lefroy Mapleton—the vain and selfish youth who murdered and robbed Mr. Gold on the Brighton Line in 1881—was of theatrical tendencies, and when the jury had returned into court and the foreman had delivered the verdict, he bowed and said in dramatic tones, "The day will come, gentlemen, when you will find—too late—that you have murdered me."

The murderer of the Darby family at Wyndham Road, Camberwell, coolly requested the judge to "hurry up and get it over," and he was of a type similar to Gleeson Wilson, the Liverpool monster of 1849, who, when his lordship concluded with the solemn words, "And may the Lord have mercy on your soul," remarked impertinently and with an impatient toss of the head, "He has mercy already, my lord!" A similar ruffian, John Jones or Owen—his bloodthirsty exploits at Denham, near Uxbridge, in 1870, have already been described in these columns—remarked with a snarl, "You know it's no good my saying anything," when the customary question was put to him.

The notorious Mrs. Manning—who, with the aid of her delightful husband—murdered Mr. Patrick O'Connor in Bermondsey, and buried his body beneath the flags of her kitchen in 1849—had any amount to say when the customary question was put to her. She inveighed, in furious tones and lurid language, against the injustice of the laws of England, and declared that her companion in the dock alone was guilty. Again and again she interrupted the judge in her curious broken English, while his lordship proceeded to pass sentence, and "Base, shameful England," were her last words as she was removed from the court, amidst a scene of great excitement.

On August 13, 1892, a triple execution took place at Maidstone, when Thomas Moore, who murdered his wife, James Tooth, who killed a drummer, and Francis Bradford, who slew his comrade, all suffered together. Of this trio Tooth remarked, when addressed in the usual formula by the Clerk of the Court, "Most of the witnesses have come here to tell lies."

In 1867 a little girl named Hamett Sax was brutally murdered by a ruffian named James Langhurst. The guilt of this brute was clearly established at the trial, but he railed against the verdict, and, threatening the jury with his clenched hand, said furiously, "You think yourselves very clever, don't you?" Richard Coates, found guilty and sentenced to death for an even more abominable crime in 1874, said, "Tell my parents that I am not afraid to die and that I shall face death as a soldier should." He showed much fortitude at the last and was apparently contrite.

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER XLIX.

WE have now to return to other characters in our story.

Aveline Gatliffe made a protracted stay at Broxbridge Hall. Like a giddy moth she fluttered around the candles of the rich and great, and in her new sphere of action felt something like pride and satisfaction.

She was made much of not only by the old nobleman, but by his visitors—by the vicar, the lawyer, and a host of other people—so that she was fain to stop very much longer than she had at first contemplated.

Lord Ethalwood talked to her of the great world—of its brilliant pleasures and its honours. He told her how such beauty as hers would command universal homage; that in London, even amidst the noblest of ladies, she would be a queen.

He tempted her with the most costly jewels, with the most magnificent dresses, and lavished luxury upon her. She had the use of a luxurious carriage; she had servants to wait upon her, hand and foot.

He tempted her through her love of the beautiful; he surrounded her with everything that was most graceful and choice; he cultivated her taste, and he spoke highly of her appreciation.

Day by day Aveline loved her new life more and more; it was so pleasant to wander in those splendid grounds, under the shade of the ancestral trees; it was so pleasant to live in those delightful rooms, with their thick, soft carpets, their superb furniture, those rare pictures and the profusion of flowers—to have carriages, horses, jewels, dresses, every luxury that imagination could devise.

It was so pleasant always to have a purse full of money, to know that she had never to trouble about ways and means, to have respect, homage, flattery shown to her.

She thought with a shudder of the little cottage at Wood Green; she contrasted her husband, in his working clothes, with the polished gentlemen she saw around her.

She was weak of soul, weak of purpose, weak of heart, weak of will. Yet she loved Tom, loved him as dearly and deeply as her light nature would allow her to love. There were nights when her pillow was wet with tears, when she sobbed as though her heart would break, but with the morning sunshine these thoughts would be scattered and dispelled.

She never forgot her husband. There was hardly an hour in which her heart did not turn to dear Tom, but she was vain, fond of luxury, easily persuaded, and the love of self, the love of wealth and magnificence, was stronger than her love for him.

Then, when Lord Ethalwood thought the love of present surroundings had taken deep root, he again addressed her in reference to the all-important subject.

Aveline and her child had been looking over a book with characters cunningly wrought on vellum.

"My child, my own Aveline," said the earl, closing the volume, "it is fit and proper that you should know something of your illustrious ancestors, especially as this little fellow is destined, by God's blessing, to carry on the line in his person. Have you thought, my darling pet, of what I hinted at during the first few days of your visit?" said he, in a more serious tone.

"Thought!" cried she. "Alas! my lord, I have thought of many things—indeed, to say the truth, I am always thinking."

"You are now in your proper sphere," he said quickly, "and I hope and trust you have no desire to leave it."

"No," she answered, hesitatingly. "No, my lord, I should be ungrateful indeed if I did; but then there's my husband."

Lord Ethalwood held up his hand reprovingly.

"I charge you, Aveline, as you love this boy, as you respect me, not to mention that man's name in my presence." He said this in so severe a tone that Aveline grew alarmed.

She fell on her knees before the earl, and placed her hand softly on his.

"Oh, sir!—oh, my lord!" she ejaculated. "Pity and pardon me. I did not mean to offend you—indeed I did not, but——"

"But what, Aveline?" he inquired coldly.

"I fear you will be angered."

"No, go on. Be frank with me."

"I am sure, my lord, you are of too generous and just a nature to blame any woman having some consideration for her husband, whom she has sworn to honour, love, and obey."

"This is simply ridiculous. You must either give up your husband, or—give up me!"

"Ah! my lord, you cannot mean it?"

"I do. I am not accustomed to say what I do not mean. I shall not seek to influence you. I simply lay both paths in life before you. It is for you to make your election. If you make up your mind to return, and take your boy with you, so be it—I will not reproach you; but, for his sake, if for none other, I charge you to duly consider this matter."

"I have considered it."

"With what result?"

"Oh, sir, I am in duty bound to obey you; but this is my first visit. You can have no possible objection to my returning to Wood Green for awhile, and consulting my husband."

"Oh, as to that, I must admit that your request is but reasonable. You are at liberty to return whenever you please; but as to taking the advice of a man who is so immeasurably inferior to me and mine, that is not to be thought of."

"I do not mean to take his advice. All I desire to to explain to him how I am situated."

"Ah, I understand. You can explain to him, but I suppose you propose returning to your proper sphere. I have already told you that your fate is in your own hands. You have to choose between rank and wealth, poverty and obscurity. You shall be a queen, a leader of fashion, you shall have unlimited wealth, more than you can possibly desire, and your boy, your beautiful child, shall succeed to a large fortune."

The face of Aveline Gatliffe flushed as she listened, and then grew suddenly pale.

"And what is the condition of all this, my lord?" she inquired.

"That you give up your husband, who—but I need not tell you what he is—and be with me, be my adopted daughter."

"The proposal is cruelly hard."

"You have but to leave a man whose tastes, habits, and manners do not and cannot possibly accord with your own."

"I have never had any reason to complain of my husband," she answered quickly.

"You must think this matter seriously over, my dear Aveline. You know my wishes, and I do hope and trust you will endeavour to act in accordance with them."

"I shall do my best," she answered sadly; "but I suppose you will not forbid my returning to Wood Green for a short time—only for a short time?"

"I should not be justified in refusing this request," he murmured, bending over her and kissing her fondly. "Weigh the matter well over before you decide. For both our sakes it would be desirable that you should follow my advice, but I leave it for you to determine; and so, my child, return to your home at Wood Green as soon as you please, but remember all I have said to you."

Aveline Gatliffe rose from her seat, embraced the old nobleman, and crept softly out of the library.

Later in the day Mr. Chicknell made his appearance at Broxbridge—the earl had sent a telegram to him to come down as soon as possible to the Hall.

"I am glad you've come, Chicknell," said Lord Ethalwood, when the lawyer entered the library—"glad for many reasons."

The man of parchment rubbed the palms of his hands together, and smiled grimly.

"Be seated," said his patron.

Chicknell drew a chair towards the table and sat down.

"Well, my lord," he murmured, "is everything going on as you desire?"

"Pretty well. You have not seen this young man, I suppose?"

"I have not deemed it expedient to do so at present—not till I received further commands from your lordship."

"You have acted with your usual discretion."

"Thank you, my lord."

"But a truce to compliments. Let us to business. My granddaughter is desirous of returning to Wood Green."

"Ah!" ejaculated the attorney.

"Yes, but only for a time. Understand that, only for a short period."

The lawyer nodded.

"I think she is disposed to accede to my wishes—at least, that is my impression."

"I am delighted to hear it."

"Well, this being so, I have thought it best to humour her; let her have her own way; she'll soon be glad to return to Broxbridge."

"You think so?"

"I feel assured of it; but that is not of any immediate moment. What I have sent to you for is to beg a favour."

"There is no favour Lord Ethalwood can possibly require from so poor an individual as myself."

"Ay, but there is. What I want you to do is to escort my granddaughter to her husband's house. After then it would be advisable for you to see Mrs. Maitland, who, from what I have heard, is a sensible, worthy woman. Wrench spoke in the highest terms of her."

"I will make it my business to see her."

"Yes, and you can explain many things which may be most important for her to know—such as our relative positions, my determination as regards this low-bred fellow, my wish to place Aveline in her proper sphere; and in addition to all this you may tell her that the only way open to effect this desirable object is for this young man to give up all claim upon the lady who has demeaned herself by becoming his wife. I leave the matter for you to arrange. I don't mind allowing this young fellow a handsome income; in point of fact I commission you to arrange with him. If he is open to reason I will settle a certain sum on him for the remainder of his life, provided he agrees to sign a deed of separation."

"I'll do my best to carry out your wishes, but the task is by no means an easy one."

In two days after this conversation, Aveline Gatliffe and her little boy left Broxbridge under the charge of Mr. Chicknell, who accompanied them to Wood Green.

Upon arriving at their destination they found nobody at the little cottage save a little girl, who had been engaged by Mrs. Maitland to wait upon Gatliffe, who was expected home in about an hour.

Aveline took off her things, and awaited the return of her husband. The lawyer paid a diplomatic visit to Mrs. Maitland. Tom Gatliffe's joy knew no bounds when he beheld his wife and child seated in the parlour. The meeting between husband and wife was of a tender and touching nature. The former seemed almost beside himself with joy—the latter, however, although as affectionate as could very well be desired, displayed at times a certain restraint.

"You have come back, my own darling Aveline," exclaimed Gatliffe, "and will, I think, never leave me again."

His wife made no reply to this.

"Eh, dearest?" he again murmured. "Do you mean never to leave me again?"

"Well, Tom, that depends upon circumstances, you know. I cannot promise—indeed, it would be unjust and wrong to do so. The earl, my grandfather, is an old man, and old people are at times whimsical. I fear I shall have to return."

A dark shade passed over the features of the engineer, who looked hard at the speaker.

"Have to return?" he murmured.

"I suppose so; but don't let us trouble ourselves about that."

She placed her arms round the neck of her husband, who for her sake forbore from asking any further questions.

For some days after Aveline's return nothing occurred to disturb the harmony of her small domestic circle; albeit the engineer could not fail to note the air of refinement which seemed to surround his wife, and pervade all her actions. He grew alarmed.

There came one evening when Tom Gatliffe sat in his garden a prey to most anxious thoughts. The sun was setting, and the birds were singing in the green depths of the trees.

He had returned home that evening, and had found Aveline, with a sad, pale face, standing listlessly at the cottage window. The smile that usually greeted him was absent from her pale face. He loved her too fondly to offer any remonstrance—he went up to her and embraced her tenderly. She appeared listless and abstracted, and took but little notice of his endearments.

He was pained and troubled, and said, after a pause:

"My dear, you don't appear to be well. Are you poorly?"

"No—oh, dear, no!" she exclaimed, flinging her arms round his neck, with a low, passionate cry, and hiding her face against his shoulder.

"I cannot quite understand you, Aveline," he said sadly. "You are so changed, so variable, so unlike your own sweet self. One moment you are here with your arms clasped round my neck; the next, you are cold and reserved, and as haughty as though you were a princess and I your slave. At times you seem to love me; and then, again, you seem to despise me. I cannot make it out. One day I think you are perfectly happy; the next you are silent and engrossed with melancholy thoughts. Aveline, there must be a cause for all this. You are tired of your husband, and feel it hard to dwell in this humble abode. Tell me if this is not so? I can bear it. Do not hesitate to speak the truth; for it is far better for me to know the worst than be kept in a state of suspense."

She clasped her arms round his neck and said he was the dearest, best, and truest of husbands. He sighed deeply as he soothed her. What had come to this lovely young wife of his? He little dreamed of the terrible struggle in the heart of her whom he had believed at one time to be all his own.

"I am afraid to say what I think," cried Gatliffe, "and perhaps it had better remain unsaid."

"I wish you to say what you think. Nothing would please me better," she answered. "Tell me what it is."

"Why, that you are more attached to your grandfather than your husband."

"Ah, shame upon you to make such an observation!" cried she.

"I hope I am mistaken. But, tell me, has this proud earl ever invited me to his grand house?"

The young wife's face became suffused with a deep blush. She hardly knew what reply to make.

"Oh, I am convinced he has not," said Gatliffe.

"No, he has not."

"He need not be afraid. I am not good enough for him, and shall never trouble him," he exclaimed, with something like bitterness in his tone.

Aveline was pained. She could not find it in her heart to make her husband acquainted with the insurmountable barrier which separated him from the earl—a barrier which nothing could remove.

So matters went on for three long weeks, until her health began to give way. A nobler woman, having once determined to make the sacrifice, would have abided by it; not so with her, however—she wavered even while she believed herself most firm. She looked ill; her face was always either flushed or white, her hands trembled; she was nervous, hysterical, and unlike herself.

In vain her husband tried everything to please her; he was, if possible, more unhappy than herself. She could not be contented with her lot at Wood Green. It was not possible for her to forget Broxbridge and its surroundings. It had been such a glimpse of paradise to her. Now the gates were shut, and she was debarred from entering.

So the fourth week dawned.

She was in receipt of a letter from the earl. It was couched in the most affectionate terms. In it the writer inquired when she would return to the home of her ancestors.

She did not deem it prudent to show this epistle to her husband, as his name was not mentioned therein, but it contained an intimation that Mr. Chicknell would pay her an early visit.

Meanwhile, the astute lawyer had been endeavouring to bring Mrs. Maitland over to the earl's way of thinking. He had not as yet made known to the lady his client's proposition for a deed of separation. Matters were not ripe enough for that at present. He must play with the fish before he landed it. Mrs. Maitland, who was honest and straightforward, besought him to speak plainly but kindly to the young engineer. She said that perhaps it would be best for all parties if Tom Gatliffe consented to Aveline taking up her abode at Broxbridge—that is, assuming the earl was obdurate, and no other course remained open.

Mr. Chicknell paid many visits to Mrs. Maitland, and felt assured she would do her best in bringing matters to a satisfactory issue.

While all this had been going on, Tom Gatliffe could not conceal from himself that his wife was in a great measure estranged from him. It was painfully evident that she yearned to be again at Broxbridge. How all this would end it was not so easy to say.

One morning, before Gatliffe had started to the works, Mr. Chicknell presented himself, and demanded to see the owner of the cottage.

Gatliffe received him stiffly, but courteously. The lawyer was a wary old soldier, who was not accustomed to jump at a sudden proposition or conclusion.

After some preliminary remarks, he told Gatliffe that Earl Ethalwood was ill, and that he most particularly desired to see his granddaughter.

He laid a great stress on this last word.

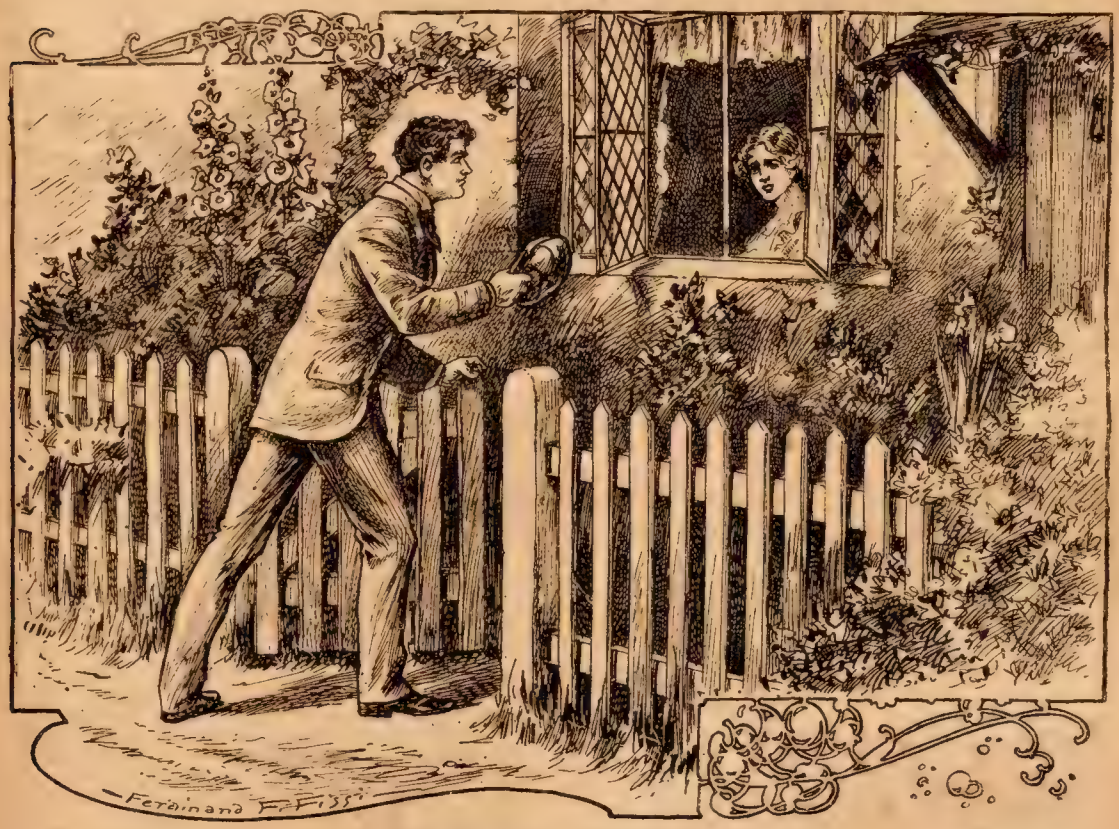
She hurriedly entered the parlour. At the sight of the lawyer her face became irradiated with a smile, which was not lost upon her husband, who explained to her the reason for Mr. Chicknell honouring them with a visit.

"The earl ill?" cried Aveline, in a tone of alarm. "I'm sorry, indeed, to hear that! Anything serious?"

"Ahem! No, nothing very serious. His medical attendant says he requires rest, and a change of air when he gets better. There's nothing to be alarmed at—that is, as far as I can learn. And so what say you, my dear lady?" inquired the lawyer, in oleaginous accents.

"As far as I am individually concerned, I should hasten at once to Broxbridge," answered Aveline; "but I leave it for my husband to determine."

"He will not offer any opposition to that, I am well assured," returned Chicknell, with a winning smile; he, throughout the interview, did his best to conciliate the engineer.



THE SMILE WAS ABSENT FROM HER PALE FACE.

A feeling as of sudden faintness came over the engineer.

"Wishes to see my wife, sir?" he said quickly.

"Yes; if you could spare her for a few days it would be deemed a special favour. You see, my young friend, the earl has been accustomed to receive homage and obedience from his inferiors, and, indeed, from his equals in many instances, and he is, from this very circumstance, exacting and uncompromising. I don't say it disrespectfully—for a more honourable gentleman does not live—but he is headstrong and self-willed, and cannot brook contradiction."

"Ah, indeed! That is but natural, I suppose. Well, sir, what do you require—my consent to the absence of my wife?"

"Well, yes, if you have no objection."

"Since our marriage she has been accustomed to have her own way in everything. I have never thwarted her or offered any opposition to her expressed wishes. If she wishes to go, there is an end of the matter."

"Better ask her, hadn't we?" returned Chicknell.

"As you please."

Gatliffe arose from his seat, opened the door, and called his wife by her Christian name.

"You had better go, dear," said the latter.

Aveline went to his side, and, placing one arm round his neck as he was seated in his chair, she then, addressing the lawyer, said:

"I hope you will tell the earl, my grandfather, what a good, indulgent, kind husband I have got, for it is but right and proper he should hear this from other lips beside mine own."

"I will tell him so, rest assured of that. Shall feel a pleasure in making this known to him," said the lawyer.

"I cannot remain longer; my time is up, sir," observed Gatliffe.

"Then I will not detain you," said the lawyer. "I shall, I dare say, have occasion to see you shortly upon a little matter of business, and so farewell till we meet again."

Soon after Gatliffe's departure, his wife and little boy started off in company with the solicitor, and reached Broxbridge Hall early in the afternoon.

When Aveline Gatliffe arrived at the earl's residence she found its owner by no means so poorly as she had anticipated. Her grandfather had a slight cold, which, for obvious reasons, had been magnified into an attack of a much

more serious nature. His cold soon disappeared after Aveline had taken up her abode once more at Broxbridge. It was a ruse on the part of the attorney to excite sympathy —a ruse which answered his purpose very well.

Now that Earl Ethalwood had his darling Aveline once more with him he was determined not to part with her, if he could help it; and, seeing that he had wealth, station, and power, the chances were that he would be able to hold his own against any odds.

Her stay at Broxbridge was much more protracted than it had been on the occasion of her first visit, and gradually the truth began to dawn upon the engineer. Mrs. Maitland had pointed out to him the desirability of not offering any opposition to the expressed wishes of so great and influential a personage as Lord Ethalwood.

"If she chooses to stay away of her own free will, so be it. She'll be no wife of mine if she does—that's all I have to say."

"Don't be unreasonable, Tom!" cried Mrs. Maitland. "The earl is now stricken in years, and in the common course of nature he cannot be long here. If only for your boy's sake, you ought to give way. A grand future is before him, if the earl chooses to make him his heir, which he has promised to do."

"What have I done that I should be cast adrift? Why am I not permitted to enter the house of which my wife is supposed to be mistress? Tell me that."

"You have not done anything, but the earl has a prejudice."

"Against whom?"

"Against all who are not nobly born. It is altogether most unfortunate as far as you are concerned; but you must remember, Tom, I never deceived you. I told you all about Aveline when you proposed and asked my consent. You knew perfectly well that there was a dark, impenetrable mystery hanging over her at that time. We cannot see into futurity, and not anyone of us could have guessed that she was nobly born. Think of all these things, and be patient."

"Patient, mother! When a man is robbed of a wife whom he dearly loves you preach patience? I will write and ask her to come back."

"It would not be wise to do so; but you can, of course, do as you think best."

"I will write. She has been gone away seven weeks, and in none of her letters does she make the slightest allusion to returning home."

"Well, then, write to her," said Mrs. Maitland hastily —"write."

Tom Gatliffe wrote a somewhat hasty epistle to his wife, in which he expressed a wish for her return. If she had made up her mind to desert him, he besought her to let him know.

In reply to this, Aveline informed him that she could not leave Broxbridge without incurring the displeasure of its owner, as she had promised to obey him in all things.

At the same time, she informed him that her love was as strong and powerful as ever, and that she would never voluntarily desert him. Still, for the present it was expedient that they should remain separate and apart.

It cost her many a pang to indite this epistle, but the urgency of the case required it, and she had no other alternative. The letter bewildered him. At first he could not realise it, but in a little time slowly and clearly the terrible truth came home to him. Aveline had forsaken him for mere vanity, wealth, and luxury. She had given him up and left him for ever.

When his mind had quite grasped that truth, a terrible cry came from his lips, and he fell into a chair in almost a prostrate condition. When he recovered, he sat for long hours in that room which was never again to be brightened by his wife's presence. Then hot anger, fierce invectives succeeded—anger so wild, so frantic, that he was for the time like a madman. Who had taken his darling from him? She would not have left him of her own free will—he felt convinced of that.

Who had tempted her? He cursed the proud lord who had robbed him of his treasure. Then he was reminded by her letter that it was of her own free will that she had done it. She had left him that she might enjoy wealth, luxury, and splendour.

She had left him and blighted his life—had broken his heart; had slighted his love for—money!

"And what will not either man or woman do for money?" he cried, with supreme bitterness. "Anything—everything!"

He struck his forehead with his clenched fist.

"Had I handed Peace over to justice, which I ought to have done, the chances are that this fatal discovery would never have been made—for fatal it has proved to me; but it is right that I should be punished for my dissimulation and falsehood on the night of the burglary committed by that scoundrel, Peace."

Gatliffe knew perfectly well that there was legal redress for him. He could claim his wife and claim his child, but he would not resort to such a course—he was too proud. If she had voluntarily left him, let her go.

He said nothing of what had happened; he went about his work for some days as usual, but with a grim, determined look on his face.

He had a strange desire. He wanted to see Peace—not that he had any respect or friendship for the man—far from it—but he wanted to know how the discovery relative to Aveline's paternity first came about. Peace would be able to give him this information.

Meanwhile, his wife was in the enjoyment of wealth, luxury, and every earthly delight and comfort; if these could give her happiness she ought to be well satisfied, and to a certain extent she was. It is true at times she confessed to herself that the part she was playing was not altogether without its darker aspects.

She waited in vain for a letter from her husband. She would have been glad to have heard from him, if it were only two or three lines just to say how he was. She was piqued, and not a little vexed; she felt hurt.

She longed to know what he thought of her conduct, what he suffered, if he was unhappy. Unknown to herself in the midst of the splendour with which she was surrounded, she was still longing for his love. What strange inconsistencies there are in the human character!

She missed him more than words can tell, and for some little time after her last letter to him she was undergoing the pangs of remorse.

The earl, who was an adept in reading characters, saw this. He judged that the young wife could not give up her husband without experiencing some sharp pangs, and in this he was not mistaken.

He did all he could to rouse her. He gave a grand dinner party, to which the leading notabilities of the county were invited, who paid homage to the mistress of Broxbridge, to whom they were most profuse in their compliments.

The earl ordered a magnificent costume from Paris for his granddaughter, who was delighted. In the novelty and excitement she forgot her sorrow, and from that hour the world took possession of her.

Lord Ethalwood kept most faithfully every promise he had made her. In this respect he was the soul of honour. He busied himself in getting together every legal proof of her identity, and in this he succeeded even beyond his anticipation. No one could for a moment question the fact of her being veritably his grandchild.

But, as the world is censorious, he deemed it advisable to put the question beyond the reach of cavillers.

Then he formally declared his great grandson his heir, and made his will, bequeathing to Aveline, his beloved grandchild, a fortune which was to have been divided between three of his children, and which would have made each of them rich.

Lord Ethalwood looked about for an instructor and companion for his well-beloved granddaughter, and he succeeded in finding the very person of all others he most desired.

Lady Mervlynn, relict of Sir Eric Mervlynn, was a lady most admirably adapted for the purpose. She knew everybody "who was worth knowing," to use her own words, had the history and genealogy of every titled family by heart, was good-natured, loquacious, courtly, and a gossip; and the earl felt assured that she would take a pleasure in preparing his granddaughter for the new sphere of action in which she was destined to move.

Her ladyship consented to educate the beautiful girl so as to fit her for her new position.

The result of her companionship with Lady Marvlynn was a perfect success. The little deficiencies of manner were soon toned down, the musical voice took a more delicate and silvery tone—the actions and movements, always graceful, became more graceful in their high-bred elegance.

Aveline was so quick in learning to adapt herself to her new sphere that Lord Ethalwood wondered at her marvellous progress.

When she had been with Lady Marvlynn for three months, one might have thought that her whole life had been spent at Broxbridge.

"You have produced a visible change in the manner and demeanour of my pet," said Lord Ethalwood; "I cannot sufficiently thank you for your valuable instruction."

When the London season opened Lord Ethalwood took Aveline to his town residence in Mayfair. She made her début in the great world, and was received there with every flattering demonstration.

The earl's prophecy was realised—her marvellous grace and beauty created a perfect furore. More than ever he at this time regretted her unfortunate and ill-assorted marriage; but for that there was no rank she might not have attained. The only thing that reconciled him in the least to it was the fact of the child's existence.

There opened then to Aveline Gatliffe a most brilliant life. Nothing she had ever dreamed of equalled the magnificent reality.

There was, however, one drawback.

She had one dispute with her grandfather—he was desirous that she should relinquish the name of Gatliffe, and that she would not consent to do.

She looked at him with flashing eyes, and her face flushed up with anger as he made this proposition.

"I have broken my husband's heart," she said, in a tone of sadness; "I have deserted him, my lord—I have embittered his life. All this is bad enough, but I will not give up his name. I was proud enough the day I bore it first, and you have no right to ask me to give it up."

These were the first angry words she had spoken to the proud old earl—the first that had ever fallen from her lips since he had known her.

He was astounded at her boldness, and murmured, "The Ethalwood spirit. I could never have believed it had I not heard her utter such a bold defiance."

He saw it was useless to urge the point—she had evidently more determination and spirit than he had given her credit for.

Nevertheless, he was deeply mortified.

Aveline was known as "Mrs. Gatliffe," Lord Ethalwood's beautiful granddaughter.

People at first used to ask where was her husband—who was he?

And the answer was:

"She married a man much beneath her, and is separated from him."

After a time they ceased to ask, and the beautiful Mrs. Gatliffe became one of the queens of the fashionable world.

She enjoyed life, she gave herself up heart and soul to the spirit of gaiety. No party, no ball or soirée was complete without her.

She was indefatigable in the pursuit of pleasure.

Lord Ethalwood smiled as he watched her

"I was not mistaken in my estimate of her character," he thought. "She has forgotten her husband."

He became warmly attached to her, chiefly because her great beauty and popularity flattered his pride.

He loved her, too, because she so closely resembled her mother.

There were times, too, when Aveline Gatliffe, looking around her, said to herself:

"I did well. If the time and the choice were to come again, I should do the same. It would have been cruel, such a life as mine in a mechanic's cottage; it would have been cruel and unjust to deprive my darling boy of this grand heritage."

Such is the sophistry people use in cheating themselves into the belief that they have acted right in casting aside their natural ties for the blandishments of the world—for the acquirement of wealth and power. We shall see in good time, if these brought happiness and a contented mind.

CHAPTER L.

While Tom Gatliffe was bearing up as best he could against the deep affliction that had fallen on him, and while his wife was being fêted, flattered, and spoiled, Charles Peace, the burglar, was pursuing his own erratic course in his native town of Sheffield.

He returned thither with a considerable amount of cash, the produce of his Denmark Hill burglary. His mother, at this time, was in a state of poverty, and his sister was in indigent circumstances. Peace at once hastened to relieve their immediate necessities, and in a short time after his return to Sheffield, his funds dwindled down, so that he very shortly became again hard-up.

He eked out his living in all sorts of odd ways. Now mending a clock and then framing a picture, in the intervals no doubt dealing to some extent with the "fence" of his old comrades in crime.

One night, while playing his violin at a public-house in Sheffield, he met with a girl with whom he had been acquainted when quite a lad. She had been at one time an intimate friend of Laura Stanbridge's, and her association with that unprincipled female had done much towards leading her into evil courses.

As Peace was leaving the house with his violin under his arm, he was accosted by the girl, whose name was Emma James.

"Don't go away like that, Charlie," cried she, as he was about to leave the house. "It isn't often we meet."

"Well, Emma lass, how goes it with you?" returned Peace, shaking her by the hand and chucking her under the chin. "What are you doing now?"

"Nothing at all at present; business is bad, and it's a struggle with most of us—leastways, I know it is with me; but we won't talk in front of a public bar."

The two passed out into the street.

"You've been having a fine time of it lately, I hear," said Emma James. "You've been to London, and all sorts of places besides—I suppose you are well up for money."

"You are greatly mistaken, Emma. I have made a little this time, but it's nearly all gone."

"Well, where do you live—which way are you going?"

"I'm living in the same house as my sister Mary."

"And where might that be?"

"In Bailey Lane. You know Mary?"

"Of course I do—or rather I did. I have not seen her for so long a time, not since Laura left the town in such a sudden and mysterious a manner."

"Ah, Laura, of course you knew her. You will be surprised to learn that I met with her in London by the merest chance in the world."

"And how was she looking?"

"So well, so beautiful, so grandly dressed, that at first I did not know her."

"Then she's cutting a dash in London—a big swell, I s'pose?"

"Yes, doing the trick somehow or other. How I can't tell; that's best known to herself."

"Some people have the devil's luck as well as their own. However, she was always a clever girl, and knew her way about as well as most persons.

"I say, Charlie, is it true that Mrs. Maitland's daughter, she whom young Gatliffe married, turned out to be the granddaughter of a nobleman?"

"Yes, that's quite true, Emma. She may thank me for all she's got; I found her out and was the first to fire the train. Oh, yes, all this is true enough. She's left Tom—so I hear."

"More shame to her. He was the best of husbands, and doted on the ground she walked. Everybody knows that."

"What matters? She's got into good quarters, is now so far removed from him, so much above him, that she's sent him to the right about. It's the way of the world, my darling—has always been so, and always will be, I suppose."

"Well, you've put her into a good thing, and I daresay she is grateful."

"Bah!" exclaimed Peace, "don't be a fool, Emma. Grateful, indeed! She didn't condescend to even honour me with a passing notice as she entered Broxbridge Hall."

"Didn't she, though."

"No, not even a nod."

"The proud, ungrateful upstart."

"Here's my little drum," said Peace, opening the door of the house with his latch-key. "Come in and see Mary."

The girl did as she was bid, and the three were in a short time after this in familiar converse. A few days after this Emma James became an inmate of the establishment. She lived with Peace for a short period, during which he made her useful in disposing of property, the proceeds of his various robberies.

It was not possible for him to remain long without having recourse to his dishonest practices. To this propensity he joined a great love of playing the fiddle and a fancy for birds and animals.

He committed several burglaries at Sheffield about this time, and in most cases he patronised the west end of the town. His favourite plan was to pick out good, substantial-looking houses with a portico. Taking advantage of a favourable opportunity, he would climb up the columns and enter the house by the window over the doorway. He was partial to the hour when the family were at dinner downstairs, and he went about his business with such celerity that he usually had a good booty out of the house before the diners had got to the length of the kickshaws and trifles with which they finished their feast.

No doubt while he lifted valuables upstairs he did so to the clinking of glasses and the play of the knife and fork downstairs, the merry jest and animated conversation, no

doubt, doing him good service in drowning any little noise he might accidentally make in the course of his operations.

Cunning and clever as Peace was, he might have escaped "trouble" for a long time, but for his passion for the society of the softer sex.

Emma James was taken into custody for offering for sale a pair of boots acquired in their way of trade, and Peace, coming to her rescue, was lodged in durance vile.

The scoundrel, as we already signified, resided in the same house with James and a married sister; and a search of the latter's house, made by the police, brought to light a large quantity of stolen property.

Then the amiable brother and sister tried their hardest to shift the onus of the crime on to each other.

The reports of the magisterial examination and trial of Peace and his two confederates cannot fail to be interesting to the reader.

In the "Sheffield and Rotherham Independent" we find the following:

Emma James, Mary Ann Nield, and Charles Peace, all residing in Bailey Lane, were charged with stealing wearing apparel, jewellery, and trinkets from Mrs. Platt, Mr. R. Stuart, and Mr. H. E. Hoole.

A large number of articles of wearing apparel, etc., was placed upon the table, and Inspector Sills said he and Policeman Marsland had found most of them at the house at which the three prisoners lived in Bailey Lane. Some few he had found upon the persons of the prisoners, and one dress he had found in a house in West Court, Westbar.

A female named Skinner said she lodged with her sister, Mrs. Platt, and that Mr. Platt's house was robbed on the evening of August 29. Some of the articles produced had been taken away at that time.

Mr. Raynor now asked for a remand, to give time for the case to be got up. Mr. Wilkinson inquired if prisoners had anything to say why they should not be remanded. The male prisoner replied that he had got the things from his sister (one of the female prisoners) for money owing to him.

Mr. Raynor said he had no doubt it would turn out that the man was the thief, and that the women were innocent. It was dastardly in Peace to seek to criminate his sister for the sake of clearing himself.

Remanded until Friday.

The same paper of October 21, 1854, contains the second examination:

At the Town Hall, Charles Peace, Mary Nield, his sister, and Emma James were placed at the bar on several charges of felony.

James offered a pair of boots in pledge at the shop of Messrs. Wright, of Westbar, which answering the description of a portion of the property stolen from the residence of Mr. H. E. Hoole, she was detained. The prisoner Peace then came forward and claimed the boots, and was given into custody.

Inspector Sills and Sergeant Marsland then searched his house in Bailey Lane, and there found a large quantity of jewellery and wearing apparel, the proceeds of robberies effected at the residences of Henry Elliott Hoole, Esq., Crookes Moor House; R. Stuart, Esq., Brincliffe Edge; Mr. George Fawcett Platt, of Priory Villa, Sharrow Lane; and Mr. Brown, of Broomhall Street.

The houses of all these parties had been robbed by effecting an entrance through the bedroom windows in the evening before the windows were closed and fastened for the night. The first charge on which evidence was taken was that of the robbery at Mr. Hoole's.

Lydia Frayman, the cook, proved that on the evening of September 12 seven pairs of boots were stolen from Mr. Hoole's dressing-room, and that from finger-marks on the portico pillar it was evident the thief had climbed the portico, and thence entered the room by the window, which was left open till nine o'clock that evening. She and the coachman identified two pairs of boots, traced to the possession of Peace, as part of the stolen property.

The next charge was that of robbing the residence of Mr. Stuart, of Brincliffe Edge.

Mrs. Stuart proved that on the night of September 29 they retired to rest about half-past ten. A gold eyeglass belonging to Mr. Stuart was missing from the top of a chest of drawers. The bedroom window was unfastened and open till they went to bed. The following day she found that there had been stolen from a chest of drawers in the bedroom, which had been unlocked, the following articles, viz.: Three small boxes, containing £3 5s. in money; a diamond ring set in plain gold, a garnet and pearl ring, a garnet ring, an enamelled mourning ring with "Forget me not" on it, an oval cornelian brooch set in enamelled gold, with a garnet sprig on it; a gold brooch set in hair, a small imitation tortoise brooch, gold drop, and jet earrings, a jet necklace, a black velvet purse with gold clasp, and worked with gilt beads; a gold hoop with rose, thistle, and shamrock worked round it; a gold watch chain, with gold seal and key; a jet chain, some jet beads, a set of seed coral beads loose, two children's coral necklaces, three purple enamelled studs set with diamonds, an enamelled mourning ring with "Betsy Frith" and the date engraved inside, a small pearl box lined with crimson velvet, and a small French paper box, containing old coins. The whole of these articles, with one or two exceptions, had been recovered by the police, and were produced and identified by Mrs. Stuart.

An assistant to Mr. Hammond, of Church Street, proved that the prisoner Nield pawned the set of diamond shirt studs for 5s.

Margaret Scotton, of West Court, widow, proved that on Monday last the prisoners brought a silk dress, rug, a pair of Wellington boots, and other things to her house. After Peace's apprehension, James handed to her several gold rings and other jewellery, and asked her to take care of them till she returned. In the evening, James was brought to her house by Inspector Sills, to whom witness gave up the rings, etc.

Mary Ann Roberts proved that she resided in Bailey Lane, next door but one to the house in which Peace, Nield, and James lived together. Last Monday, James brought a small box and a bundle of clothes into her house, and asked her to take care of them. The box was locked. That afternoon the police came to search Peace's house, and as they were going away she called Sergeant Marsland into her house, and gave him the box and bundle. The box was found to contain part of the jewellery stolen from Mr. Stuart's.

Edward Parker, of Kenyon Street, boot-closer, proved that a month ago Peace sold him a garnet ring for two shillings. The ring was too large for him, but he got it altered. Yesterday Inspector Sills came to him, and he gave the ring up.

The prisoner Nield made a statement, admitting that she had pawned the diamond studs and other things; but declared that she had been brought into the snare by her brother, the prisoner Peace. She had seen Peace wearing some of the rings, and also the diamond studs, several times, and did not know but that he had come honestly by them.

Peace said his sister (the prisoner Nield) had given wearing apparel, jewellery, etc., to James, whom he was about to marry. Nield had given James these things in payment of a debt of thirty shillings, which she owed him.

The girl James made a similar statement.

The prisoners were fully committed for trial on these charges, but were ordered to be brought up again on the Tuesday, when evidence would be given, proving that other property found in their possession was part of that stolen from Mr. Platt's, of Priory Villa, and Mr. Brown's, of Broomhall Street.

At the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions, Charles Peace, joiner, Emma James, spinster, servant, and Mary Ann Nield, married, felt-dresser, were indicted for stealing a quantity of rings, brooches, and other jewellery, from the house of Mr. Richard Stuart, at Brincliffe Crescent. Mr. Overend prosecuted; the prisoners were undefended.

The house was robbed on the night of August 30, and the prisoners were proved to have pawned portions of the stolen property, and others were found in their possession.

Peace, in his defence, said a watchmaker, named Bethley, in Divison Street, had kept his sister (Nield) for some years, and she had had three children by him. Bethley not having given her any money lately sent the jewellery and a bundle of wearing apparel by him to her, instead of money.

The female prisoners declined to say anything in their defence.

The jury found all the prisoners guilty of feloniously receiving the property knowing it to have been stolen.

Evidence was also given that Peace had been previously convicted of felony.

Peace was sentenced to four years' penal servitude, and the female prisoners to be imprisoned for six months each with hard labour.

CHAPTER LI.

Charles Peace had not counted on receiving so heavy a sentence, and at first he was much borne down. He had been for a long time under the notice of the constabulary, who felt assured that he had perpetrated a series of robberies without being brought under the ban of the law. Had the authorities

been oblivious of this fact, perhaps eighteen months, or at the most two years, would have been the maximum punishment awarded to him.

"Penal servitude," says an authority on this subject, "is a thing many people hear and read of a great deal, but about which only a certain number know really anything."

Mr. Charles Reade has touched the question in a masterly manner in his powerful romance of "Never Too Late to Mend," but happily for the welfare of society at large, and criminals in particular, modifications have been made in the treatment of prisoners since the publication of Mr. Reade's work.

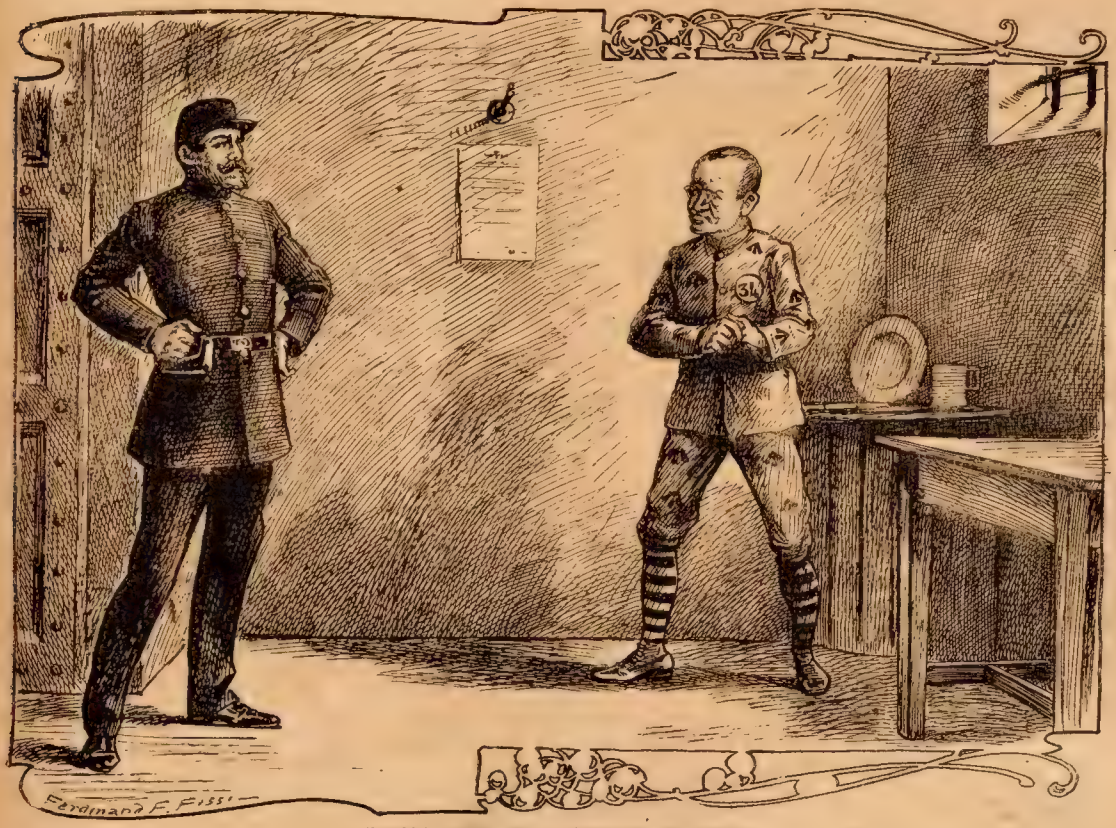
Peace, as we have already seen, was selfish and unscrupulous. He would have sacrificed his sister without the slightest compunction of conscience if he could thereby have saved himself. It transpired, however, at the trial, that he was the principal, his sister and the woman James being but accomplices. The bench took a righteous view of the question, and Peace simply got his deserts.

Every prisoner on first entering the convict service has to undergo nine months of separate confinement in a cell by himself, working in that cell, and never leaving it except for exercise or to go to chapel.

During that nine months no remission is given; but for the remainder of his time, if he obtains the full quantum of eight marks a day, which, curiously, he earned by good conduct and the completion of his day's work, whatever that may be, he is allowed a remission equal to three months in each year, or one-fourth of his sentence, except the nine months.

The full amount of marks for a man to earn in a year is 2,920. If less than this number is earned, so much remission is lost. It is seldom that a man goes through the whole of his service without losing some marks.

The day after the arrival of Peace and his fellow-prisoners they were all ordered to strip a second time for medical examination, and as a considerable time elapsed before Peace's turn came he had to remain in that state rather



"WELL," CRIED PEACE, "WHAT'S UP NOW?"

He, however, endeavoured to make out that he was an ill-used man.

After the sessions had come to a conclusion, he was taken in the prison van with a batch of convicts to the gaol where they were to undergo the first probationary term of their sentences.

With a heavy heart, Peace once more entered the "Black Maria," which was to convey him to a convict establishment, with which he had never had any previous acquaintance.

When the prison van arrived at its destination the convicts were told to alight. The first thing on entering the prison, each man was released from his handcuffs, and told to seat himself on a long bench in the passage. Peace, during the progress of the van through the town, had been greatly annoyed at the shouting, screaming, and laughing of his fellow prisoners, who were, however, now much more quiet and comparatively well-behaved.

They were all subjected to a new and, to Peace, a most painful operation. He was well aware that it would be next to useless, if not quite hypocritical, for one in his position to lay claim to any considerable delicacy of feeling, or to be over scrupulous in matters of common decency.

longer than was good for him. It was useless to complain, he had to submit to the humiliating process with the best grace he could. When the inspection was concluded, he had his hair cut after the approved prison fashion, and was put into his cell to make mats.

His cell was white as the driven snow. His domestic duties were explained to him, and he was informed a heavy penalty would be inflicted if a speck of dirt was discovered on the wall or floor of his cell, or if his cocoa-bark mattress should not be neatly rolled up after use and the strap tight, and steel hook polished like glass, and his little brass gas-pipe glittering like gold.

He listened to all these injunctions with exemplary patience, having made up his mind to be, if possible, a model prisoner. He had in view the remission of his sentence, which was only to be gained by exemplary conduct.

To a sanguine or irritable temperament the monotony of prison life is almost insupportable. Peace was nearly getting into trouble on the first Sunday he spent in prison for a very unintentional violation of the prison rules.

In accordance with these rules, convicts are not allowed to turn their heads in any direction in the chapel; if they do

so it is the duty of the attendant officer to take them before the governor, who, in all probability, will punish them for their disobedience.

It is fair to assume that those who framed these rules had some good end in view in being stringent in the matter of posture in religious service. The difficulty with Peace was to discover whether the spiritual welfare of the prisoners or the preservation of a more than military discipline amongst them, even in matters of religion, had appeared to them to be of the greatest importance.

It is probable, however, that neither of these considerations decided the question, but that the principal object of these regulations was to preserve in the convict mind, even in the act of worship, the idea of punishment in a perfectly lively and healthy condition.

Be that as it may, on Peace's first Sunday in chapel with his English Prayer-book before him, he found himself quite unable to follow the chaplain in the services in which he was engaged.

Turning over the leaves of the Prayer-book in the vain hope of finding the proper place, and happening to cast his eyes over the shoulder of a prisoner in front of him in order to find it, the movement caught the eye of the officer who sat watching every face. Peace saw from the stare and frown which followed, indeed, that he had committed some grave offence. He immediately resumed his proper attitude, and sat out the service as right as his neighbours, and so escaped the threatened punishment.

"They are jolly particular in this establishment," mused Peace. "Mustn't even look, it appears."

Nothing, however, was said to him by the official, but he felt that he had narrowly escaped being reported.

Every day the prisoners, male and female, old and young, were made to attend chapel, and twice on Sundays.

The appearance of the sacred edifice quite upsets the idea of "freedom" in religious worship.

The chaplain's pulpit is perched high up against the wall at the end, so as to enable him to get a view of his entire congregation; otherwise this would be impossible, for while the larger number of adult male prisoners occupy the body of the chapel, the women and children are partitioned off on either side by a tall partition, which quite precludes the possibility of their seeing beyond.

Before the great space where the men sit is a pair of tall iron gates, and they are ranged on seats rising one above another, with warders in attendance, who are constantly on the watch. The men are expected to look steadfastly before them, regarding through the iron bars the preacher in his pulpit; they must raise or lower their Prayer-books with elbows squared, and all at once, like soldiers in a drill.

They must not scrape their feet against the floor without having afterwards to explain the reason of such a movement. They may scarcely wink an eye, cough, or make any noise without danger of rebuke or punishment.

It is a terrible and humiliating state of servitude these miserable, guilty creatures have to endure, but with all this it does not seem to deter them from the commission of crime, for many, as soon as they are released, have recourse to their old practices until they are again caught, and sentenced to another and longer term of imprisonment.

Peace began to be weary of his monotonous life. One morning he said to the under turnkey:

"I say, my friend, how long am I to be cooped up in this cheerful little abode—not the whole of the time, I hope?"

"Prisoners are not permitted to talk out of hours," said the turnkey, looking straight before him, but not at his questioner.

"Ah! I beg your pardon, guv'nor; I meant no offence."

The turnkey, whose name was Wilson, looked hard at the prisoner, and seemed lost in thought.

Peace felt a little uncomfortable. Perhaps the man would report him to the governor.

"I beg your pardon again; I hope I've not offended you."

The man shook his head and walked away.

"I'm sorry I spoke," muttered Peace to himself.

The turnkey returned.

"Now, then, No. 34."

"Well," cried Peace, "what's up now?"

"Prisoners shut their own doors," returned the man.

Peace closed the door of his cell.

"Lively!" he ejaculated, "not to say encouraging. Well, I am blest, this is a place a cove's got to lock himself in, it appears."

Peace had gone through the usual formula of prison life; one working day was just the same as another. He did his share of work, and his custodians had no reason to complain of him as far as industrious habits were concerned; he kept his cell scrupulously clean. The cell in which Peace was confined was small enough in all conscience. It was not much over seven feet in length, and four feet five inches in breadth; its height being a trifle over eight feet. By the side of the door was a small window of thick rough glass, and beneath this was a little flap table, which had to be let down when the hammock was slung.

As may be readily imagined, there was nothing superfluous in this narrow prison house, only just enough to admit of a human being existing in the narrowest possible compass. Over the table was a small shelf. Below the shelf, and at the opposite end of the cell to the window and flap table, was the hammock, which was rolled up in the smallest possible compass, and strapped against the wall. There was a water spout, so ingeniously contrived that turned to the right it sent a small stream into a copper basin, and to the left into a bottomless close stool at some distance.

There was also a small gas pipe tipped with polished brass. In one angle of the wall was a small commode or open cupboard, on whose shelves were ranged a bright pewter plate, a knife and fork, and a wooden spoon. There was a grating at the bottom of the door for the air to come in, and another for foul air to go out if it chose.

An ordinary stable bucket, with iron handle and hoops, was on the floor alongside of a low wooden stool, a small hand broom, and in a corner under the table a scrubbing brush and flannel. Two tin tallies, with the number of the cell, prison, and hall, hanging behind the door, completed the furniture of this lively and cheerless apartment.

The cellular system has, however, many advantages, and is a far better arrangement than that adopted in the earlier days of prison management.

At one time English gaols were denounced by Howard and others "as schools for instruction in iniquity," and there can be but little doubt that to an extent this was true.

The poor dandy priest, Dr. Dodd, who was executed for forgery, spent six months in Newgate before he suffered death by hanging, and during part of his time he was forced to herd with the common rabble.

The case of the unfortunate divine-about-town made a great sensation. He really was hardly dealt with, for he had done all he could by confession and restitution to atone for his crime.

Dr. Johnson fought for him nobly.

Twenty thousand people signed a petition for his pardon. Consequently, when the ill-fated divine was hung and the poem published, hundreds of fine ladies and gentlemen read, and perhaps deplored, his watery blank verse, and thus most unexpectedly felt a transient interest in the question of prison discipline.

But a change has come over us since the days of Dr. Dodd and Fauntleroy; though it would appear that the sympathy evinced by a certain section of the community for murderers is still extant.

The Rev. John Clay, who was for many years chaplain of Preston Gaol, in discussing the question of prison discipline, says, "If we regard the prisoner as a moral patient, the paramount object is to render him as amenable as possible to the reformatory process. The tendency of separate confinement is to lower the bodily organs and weaken the faculties.

"The discipline must be modified to correct this tendency. The prisoner probably lived a life of gross animal indulgence.

"Accordingly his animal propensities must be first lulled to sleep; this is most effectually done by the repressing power of isolation.

"Plenty of fresh air, therefore, brisk exercise, and suitable diet are necessary.

"If the diet is too low, it will turn depression into despondency; if too high, it will produce excitement and irritability.

"The god of the criminals is their belly, and to baulk the belly god to the utmost extent is both wise and just.

"In consequence of lowering the vital energies, the brain becomes more feeble, and therefore more susceptible.

"That is to say, the man becomes more impressible, though this is not the invariable result.

"The cell will sometimes only increase the reserve of the sullen, the stupidity of the dull, the idiotcy of the feeble, and the craft of the cunning.

"Solitude is indeed a terrible solvent, but the main element in a man's character will sometimes withstand its potency when all other characteristics are melted down.

"But, as a general rule, a few months in a separate cell renders a prisoner strangely impressible.

(To be continued.)

The Bold Border Bandit

How Cole Younger avenged the murder of his Father and the torture of his Mother and Sisters.

"War! War! My noble father!
Thus I fling it;
And fair-eyed peace, farewell!"
—BEAUMONT & FLETCHER, "The Humorous Lieutenant."
Act I., Sc. 1.

PART I.

THE old adage, "Give a dog a bad name and hang him," was never better illustrated than by the treatment meted out to Thomas Coleman Younger and his brothers as long ago as the early seventies of the last century. Was a bank raided, and the cashier shot, it was the work of the Younger brothers. Did a mob of bandits "hold up" a stagecoach on one of the lonely Missouri roads, certainly the brigand could be none other than the redoubtable Cole Younger. Was a train wrecked, or a store burgled, or a warehouse rifled, only Cole Younger and his brothers could possibly have done it. Indeed, every important crime that startled the Yankees of the Central States after the close of the bloody Civil War was laid to the account of Thomas Coleman Younger, or "Cole," as he was familiarly called. In the eyes of the people he was a brigand, a guerilla captain, a bandit, a robber, Dick Turpin, Robin Hood, and the prince of murderers all rolled into one. Children were taught to dread him as if he was the "Bogey Man," peaceable citizens shuddered at his very name, regarding him as the incarnation of all that was evil, and fully convinced that Cole had only to know that they were possessed of a few dollars to immediately make a descent on them and secure the booty.

Who, then, was this Cole Younger, whose name was far more familiar to young Americans thirty years ago than even their own President's? Well, in the first place, Cole Younger was a gentleman by birth and education, and but for one slip—— But that will be told later. Cole was the son of a prosperous landowner whose property lay in the country round about Independence, Missouri. He was born on January 15, 1844, and was brought up at home, for the most part, though at times he did attend the nearest school.

To understand the circumstances under which Cole's youth was passed, we must mention the condition of the State of Missouri at that time. Independence is situated in Jackson County, Missouri, and is only about seven miles from Kansas City, a large town on the border line between Missouri and its neighbouring State of Kansas. Between the Missourians and the people of Kansas a bitter feud raged. The chief cause for this was the question of slavery. Many of the folk of Missouri were slaveowners—indeed, Younger, senior, kept slaves—and they wanted Kansas admitted as a slave State. On the other hand, in Kansas there were a number of ardent abolitionists who were determined that their State should be free. To further their end they invited a quantity of immigrants to come from the north-eastern States of America and settle in Kansas, knowing that the immigrants would be folk brought up in hatred of slavery. Immigrants came readily enough, for they received substantial help from the Kansas Government; but, unfortunately, the new blood did not prove desirable. Every Northerner who had "a past" to live down shipped to Kansas; northern gaols found it convenient and cheap to release prisoners on the understanding that they went to Kansas; ruffians of every type found the welcome extended by the abolitionists of Kansas just what they wanted—plenty of money and no questions asked. The immediate result of this was that all along the frontier between Kansas and Missouri were settled bands of the most lawless men in the States. These scoundrels, or "jayhawkers," as the Missourians called them, used to make raids into the neighbouring country and lift cattle, rob farmsteads, drive off slaves, and generally prove themselves a nuisance. After a little, this spirit of raiding spread, and peaceable Missourians took up arms to protect themselves against the organised robbery of the new Kansas folk. Then from the results of the raids sprang up vendettas, and men who had the lives of one or more of their dear ones to avenge took to the road and became guerillas. It was a murder committed by some of these Kansas jayhawkers that forced Charles Quantrell to turn bandit. It happened thus: One day a party of Kansas freebooters came across Quantrell and his brother, and without any reason save the love of cruelty, they shot the elder lad dead, and left Charles so riddled with bullets that they expected he would die in half an hour. Some Indians found young Quantrell, nursed him and cured him of his wounds. Then Charles found out that the men who had murdered his brother formed a band under the leadership of one Captain Picken, so, changing his name to Charles Hart, he joined Picken's troop. That was in 1857. In the next six months thirteen of Picken's best guerillas fell. Young Hart alone knew who killed them. Two years passed before Quantrell had definite proof that Picken himself was present when the murder of his brother was perpetrated. Then in his cups, Picken told him of the grand raid on the Cottonwood River, when he had shot a youngster and left another for dead. That sufficed. Three days later Picken was shot, with two more of his ruffianly band. In all, out of the thirty-two who took part in the murder of his brother, Charles Quantrell shot thirty! On Picken's sudden death, Charles became leader of the troop, and discarded the name of Hart. In a short time he was recognised as one of the most dangerous and vindictive of all the freebooters of the frontier.

In 1861 the American Civil War broke out, Cole Younger being then seventeen years of age. One day he was attending a dance given by Colonel Mockbee, of Harrisonville, a gentleman who was known to have sympathy with the Southerners. Several of the Missouri militia, troops of the Unionists stationed at Harrisonville, forced their company on Colonel Mockbee, out of sheer insolence, and among these was a licentious brute named Captain Walley. This last-named "gallant" officer made himself extremely insulting to the ladies of the party, and notably to Younger's sisters, who refused to dance with him. Annoyed at this, the captain sought out Cole Younger, and, striding up to him, asked:

"Where is Quantrell?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"That's a d——d lie!" remarked Walley. The next instant he was sprawling on the ground, for Cole had knocked him down. Friends intervened and separated the couple, and Cole went off to his home at once.

Knowing that Walley was an unscrupulous man, Cole thought it would be better for him if he kept out of the way for a time, so early next morning he left his parents and set out for one of their farms in Jackson County. It was well that he did so, for that night Walley and a band of scouts raided his father's place and demanded the surrender of Cole, whom Walley accused as being a spy. The father denounced the statement as a lie, declaring that, though a slave-owner, he himself was in favour of the Union. The following morning a second demand was made for the surrender of Cole, and, this being conveyed to the lad, who knew that the Union militia had only one way of treating those whom they chose to accuse of being spies, namely, to hang them to the nearest tree, without trial, he thought it best for him to leave his father's farm and join one of the bands of Confederate scouts which were then in the country. So at seventeen we see him driven from his parents' roof by the lying accusation of a scoundrel who wished to kill him in order to spite his sisters.

For several days Cole Younger wandered about in the woods, almost fearing to sleep lest he should be captured and hung, and then he fell in with Captain Quantrell, and promptly joined his band. In the company was his brother-in-law, John Jarrette, who was orderly sergeant. That was really the first time that Cole had ever met Quantrell.

It was not long before the young guerilla had a chance to smell powder. In the district a Kansas marauder, named Burris, had a detachment, raiding those who were defenceless, and Quantrell decided to attack this as soon as he could find it. All he knew was that they were somewhere in the neighbourhood of Independence. On the evening of November 10, 1861, Quantrell's troop suddenly struck Burris's camp. In an instant all was confusion. The attackers had only thirty-two men, while Burris had eighty-four under his command. However, there was no time for reflection, and

bullets fell like rain. The first volley broke up the Kansas ranks, for Burris commanded ruffians, but Quantrell had in his company only steady gentlemen, and each man was a well-known shot. The Kansas men fled like sheep, leaving twelve of their comrades dead on the ground, and abandoning all their camp equipment, which the victors destroyed.

All that winter Quantrell skirmished round Independence, occasionally getting in touch with the main troops of the Confederate army, but more often carrying out his own campaign. This is the way they used to harry the Union soldiers. One morning in February, Quantrell, Pool, Gregg, Shepherd, Todd, and Cole Younger quietly entered Independence, and before anyone realised what was going to happen, they charged in pairs down three of the principal streets leading to the courthouse. Every soldier they saw they shot on sight, but civilians they respected, and women and children were perfectly safe. Other members of the company followed the leading pairs, and in twenty minutes the raiders had reached the courthouse, broken into it, seized all the ammunition they required, looted a shop or two for provisions, and were out of the hostile town, bearing their spoils with them, and leaving a row of dead militiamen in their wake. In that attack the guerillas had no killed, but eleven were wounded.

A similar attack was made on February 21, but it was unfortunate, for the militia had been reinforced, and, instead of one company, the garrison had been strengthened to four companies. One guerilla was killed on that day and his body carried off and buried by the raiders. To avoid capture Quantrell ordered his men to separate for a short time, and to rally again in March. This they did, and had planned to make a raid on Independence, being assured that it was then garrisoned by 300 jayhawkers. The troop marched as far as Little Blue Church when they were met by a scout, who told them that there were 600 jayhawkers in the town, so Quantrell swung his men to the south-west, fighting the military picket at the Big Blue River, and capturing the bridge. Then the irregulars pushed on to New Santa Fé, and were billeted there, expecting to be attacked before morning.

They were not wrong in their expectations, for a band of 300 militiamen were sent out against them. The soldiers arrived at midnight, and called on Quantrell to surrender. The captain commenced to parley. Would the soldiers allow Major Tate and his family, in whose house Quantrell was hiding, to escape? The militiamen agreed, and the major and his folk bundled out into the darkness. Then Quantrell was again bidden to surrender, but he said he must think for a bit. While he was trying to plan some means of escape the besiegers set fire to the house, and Quantrell called out for another parley. The answer was that unless he surrendered in a minute all his men would be hung. "Catching comes before hanging!" shouted the captain, and he hastily gave the word for those of his men who had shot guns to form the van. Then, with a yell, the guerillas burst from the flaming building. The shot guns were fired at the militia; those who had revolvers ready picked off a man as they passed, and in less time than it takes to tell Quantrell's troop were hidden in the wood. Unfortunately, the band was five short, for four had surrendered before hostilities had commenced, and one man, named Hoy, was knocked down by a clubbed musket and taken prisoner. Poor Hoy was kept in prison for many months, and then hanged. The militia lost seventeen killed and twenty-nine wounded.

This exasperated Captain Walley, for he learnt then that Cole Younger was with Quantrell, and he sent a detachment to round up his enemy. On the way the militia attacked the house of an old man named Blythe, who was suspected of being friendly with the Confederates. Blythe was not at home, but the "brave" soldiers caught his little boy, aged twelve, and brutally murdered him.

News of this outrage reached Quantrell in a very short time, and he took measures for vengeance. At the moment the captain had only a dozen men, including Cole, with him, and so he had to plan an ambuscade, instead of the open attack which he so much preferred. He knew that the soldiers must pass through a narrow gorge, known as "Blue Cut," before they could return to Independence, and he decided to conceal his men at the top of one of the sides of this ravine. He did so, and as soon as the whole command was well in the "Cut," Quantrell gave the word to fire. Only a few of the militia left the gorge alive.

In May the question of a supply of ammunition for the irregulars grew pressing, and so Quantrell disbanded his men for a month, and he, Cole Younger, and Todd boldly went into the town of Hannibal, and put up at the best hotel. They masqueraded as officers of the Union Army, and were not detected, although they spent every evening with the officers of the garrison there!

Cole had a fairly quiet time till August, 1862, when he cast in his lot with Colonel Hays, who was recruiting a regiment for the Confederate Army in Jackson County. Then it was that Younger formally joined the ranks of the Confederates.

At that time Independence was held by Colonel Buell and about 600 men, but before attacking it Colonel Hays wanted more precise information of the garrison. Younger volunteered to get it. Next morning an elderly countrywoman, with a basket of vegetables and fruit on her arm, rode through the pickets and into Independence. A sergeant chaffed the elderly dame, and got as good as he gave; she sold her wares and set out on the return journey. Then it struck one of Colonel Buell's staff that the countrywoman was mounted on a better horse than was usual, and a mounted picket was told off to accompany her. They soon came close to her, and one of the men rode forward and tried to seize her bridle. The sergeant and eight more men were about thirty paces to the rear. Suddenly the apple-woman whipped a revolver from out of her basket and shot the picket dead, while the sergeant caught a glimpse of a very masculine, spurred boot come from beneath the skirt and drive into the horse's side. That night

Cole had knocked him down.

Colonel Hays had a complete plan of Independence, and on August 11 he attacked it, and, having shot Colonel Buell's defending force to pieces, captured the town.

For this Cole Younger was made first lieutenant in Colonel Hays's regiment, in which his brother-in-law, Jarrette, was a captain.

Cole's first fight after obtaining commissioned rank was at the battle of Lone Jack, when Colonels Cockrell and Hays attacked Major Foster, who had with him the remnant of his command at Lexington. Foster had some artillery under him and quite a respectable army. The attack commenced at daybreak, and for five hours a hand-to-hand fight raged in the main street of the tiny village of Lone Jack. Jackman and Younger charged the artillery and captured the guns, but they were shortly routed by Foster, who personally led a large force against them and recaptured the pieces. It was during this battle that Younger distinguished himself by riding along the Confederate lines, in full view of the enemy, distributing ammunition out of a splint basket.

The battle resulted in a victory for Hays, though had the Unionists been able to hold out for another half-hour the Confederates would have been forced to retreat. Foster was badly wounded, as was his brother, and in the letters which he subsequently wrote he confessed that they both owed their lives to the chivalry of Younger.

It was just about this time that an event occurred which made Cole more bitter than ever against Captain Walley and his associates. Cole's father, besides being a great landowner, was one of the mail contractors for the State, and had stables along five hundred miles of road. From time to

time the jayhawkers, instigated by Walley, raided the Younger stables and stole horses and vehicles, on one occasion taking animals and carts to the value of £4,000. Then one day Walley met Mr. Younger as the latter was returning from Kansas City, and shot him dead and rifled his body. Though arrested on the charge, Walley managed to bribe persons to prove an alibi, but in later years he practically admitted that he had committed the crime. Half an hour after the murder, Walley was met by two young girls, Nannie Harris and Charity Kerr, and, fearing that they had recognised him, he had them arrested and lodged in one of the Kansas guard-rooms. There they were joined by Younger's sisters, who were also arrested by Walley. The Union soldiers then turned their attention to Mrs. Younger, and burned her house over her head, stole all her property, hounded her from place to place, dragged her out of her home at midnight on a snowy night and forced her to walk eight miles with her children. In the end they broke her health down entirely as well as reduced her to poverty. Aunt Suse, the Youngers' faithful negro servant, was tortured by the militia officers, and on one occasion hanged and left for dead because she would not tell them where her mistress had her tiny store of money hidden. The Younger boys, Jim, John, and Bob, all much younger than Cole, were harassed, and even as late as 1870 Walley's men hanged little John Younger up till he was unconscious, and then hacked his body about with their clasp-knives. By tender nursing John Younger recovered, but that barbarity hardened his heart.

In the autumn of 1862 Colonel Hays went southwards, Captain Jarrette accompanied him, and Cole was left in command and in charge of the wounded, no easy task, for the militia refused to recognise any Red Cross; so Cole had to improvise hospitals and hide his sufferers in outlying farmhouses. While he was doing this Captain Quantrell and a band of men went into Kansas State and raided the town of Olathe, and on the return journey attacked Paola. At this place they killed a young man named Judy, whose father was originally a native of Cass County, Missouri, but who had fled to Kansas for refuge. Judy, after the loss of his son, returned to Cass County, having first sworn before a Kansas magistrate that Cole Younger had killed his son, and so secured his indictment for murder. Judy knew perfectly well that Cole was not even a member of the band which raided Paola, but he was a friend of Captain Walley, and wished to curry favour by accusing the unfortunate Cole.

In the process of tending the wounded it was but natural that Cole should come in contact with the militia occasionally, and he generally managed to make a very pretty fight when necessary. On one of these occasions he saved the life of one of his men, named McDowell, by picking him up and carrying him out under a heavy fire. Three months later McDowell repaid him by betraying the Confederate camp to the militia officers.

RIDING ALONG THE CONFEDERATE LINES.

On Christmas Day, 1862, Cole heard that some of the men who had been concerned in the murder of his father were in Kansas City, and he decided to go and have a shot at them. Till nearly midnight they scoured the place, a mere half-dozen of them, but disguised, without seeing anyone who they thought was likely to have had a hand in the foul crime. Just on midnight the Confederates were in a drinking saloon, and then Cole spotted a trooper who had been playing cards, and who undoubtedly was one of Walley's soldiers. The trooper saw that he was recognised, and made a movement to get at his pistol, but Cole was too quick for him and shot him down in an instant. Then a free-fight began, and the six plucky Confederates had to fight their way out of Kansas City and carry on a running skirmish till they were past the last picket on the Independence road. It was a foolhardy thing to do, but save for a few scratches they were none the worse for the adventure. For this act a price of a thousand dollars was put on Cole Younger's head, and it was in the hopes of getting this that Walley drove Mrs. Younger out of her home and burnt it behind her.

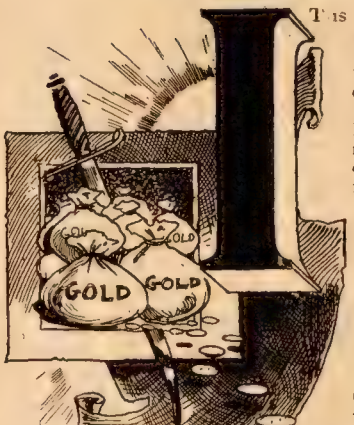
(To be concluded.)

PATHETIC TRAGEDY at PISA.

Murder of a Miser.

Story of a JEALOUS WIFE.

"Hold, selfish wretch! the hand of death
E'en now is raised to grasp thy breath
And whelm thy soul in horror—
Ere morn, thy form shall be as cold,
As senseless as thy darling gold.
Who'll count thy wealth to-morrow?"
—ACASTRO.



It is a most extraordinary fact that the weather has much to do with the subject of one's conversation. I do not mean that we English people, who have nothing more interesting to talk about, frequently fall back upon it as a convenient topic. I maintain that the weather, the temperature, the season of the year, controls the mind and influences the subjects selected for conversation. Charles Dickens would never have dreamed of telling his ghost-stories in a hayfield in the midst of June, and Boccaccio would hardly have arranged Filomena, Pamfilo, and the other of Pampinsa's guests to sit around a blazing log fire or in the chimney-corner to tell their love-tales. Stories that are a bit "creepy" should be told at the "very witching hour of night," when the wind is howling outside, and the snow is drifting, whilst tales of love and romance are more highly and delicately flavoured if read or told amongst the roses, or when reclining upon the mossy bank of a woodland, in the midst of summer.

It certainly was the weather that influenced our conversation when our artist and myself broke our journey on the road to St. Albans last Easter Monday, when the snow came down as if on a day in December. It was quite a little blizzard, from which we sought shelter in the tap-room, or, rather, kitchen, of an old-fashioned inn upon the northern road, and, after satisfying the inner man, we lit our pipes, and some half-dozen of us pulled our chairs near to the fire that was blazing cheerfully upon the hearth, although we were well into spring.

The conversation (just out of courtesy to the weather) turned upon murders, and, of course, the Edwards and Chapman cases were discussed. The ball was set rolling, and I noticed a merry twinkle in our artist's eye as he volunteered to tell a story. There was a decided touch of the "Modern Savage" about it, but it went well, and I was encouraged to go one more, and relate the experience of the gentleman whose body was snatched, and whose miraculous escape from a living tomb was told in these pages only recently. I knew well enough that this story, with all its horrible details, would be disbelieved, and that an argument would be started by the company as to the truth of the circumstances, when one gentleman, who had been sitting silently and listening attentively, emphatically declared that he had known a very similar case, although not quite so thrilling, and that the subject who had nearly had the unpleasant experience of being buried alive was an acquaintance of his father's, a German, who had fought in the wars of France and Prussia in the middle of the last century, and he vouched for the truth of the story, which I will repeat in his own words as near as I can.

"Everybody knows, of course, that a person may continue for several successive days in a state of apparent death, and it is quite certain that frequently the unfortunate being often sees and hears all that is passing without being able to give the least sign of consciousness. My father's friend was a volunteer in the Prussian army, and during the campaign he was carried sick into Vesoul, and conveyed to the convent of the Sisters of Mercy, to whose care he was especially recommended. The greatest attention was paid to him, but, to all appearances, he expired. His kind nurse, however, could not believe that he was really dead, and left him for two days in bed.

"In the meanwhile the French arrived in force, and compelled the little garrison of the place to retire, and the supposed corpse was left alone, for the victorious soldiers remained in the village but a short time, not thinking it worth while to hold it. The sisters, therefore, returned to their convent, and the first thing the one who had nursed the soldier did was to go to the room in which he had been left for dead. Although days had passed, he was, in appearance, just as she had left him. She was now more than ever confident that this was not death, and, with the assistance of a surgeon, she did everything that was possible to restore him; but her efforts were unrewarded. The next day, however, he came to his senses, and declared that he had heard all that had passed around him"

I was glad to hear this story, and then and there made a note of it, intending upon the first opportunity to place it before those of our readers who may have doubted the truth as to the extraordinary trance which was related in the article already referred to, "How they Snatched my Body." But I was in luck's way on this Easter Monday, for one of the company present found our story-telling contagious, and recounted one of the most astounding tragedies and romances of crime that it has ever been my privilege to listen to. Although the narrator declared it to be an historical fact, I, at the time, doubted it, but I was referred to certain authorities, which I have since consulted, and find that all the details of this strange crime as recited to us in the room of

THE LEANING TOWER AT PISA.

the roadside inn on Easter Monday last were uncoloured facts.

The tragedy—or, rather, I should say tragedies—took place in the Italian town of Pisa, known throughout the world for its wonderful leaning tower. The story, which I was fortunate to get hold of in this accidental manner, I

find is invariably told to strangers who visit the Church of St. Catherine, in Pisa, for the bodies of two of the victims are there buried. But to the recountal of these dreadful, blood-curdling crimes, which culminated in a scene that may well remain identified with the Italian city of the leaning tower for centuries to come.

It was at the time of the disturbances in Genoa, when the two factions of the town were up in arms and carrying on a little civil war, that many of the citizens fled from the place to other parts of the country. Amongst them was a Genoese, by the name of Grimaldi, who, packing up his belongings, came alone to Pisa and took a small house on the outskirts of the town. He was a man of about sixty years of age at the time, and led the life of a recluse, dressed very shabbily, and lived in the meanest possible manner. He was the subject of great curiosity amongst the townfolk when he had been there some year or two, but it was not until some people who had known him in Genoa came to Pisa that the cause of his eccentricities of living became known.

He was reported to be a man of enormous wealth but of the most miserly disposition, so much so that he was never known to keep a servant or a dumb animal in his place on account of the expense. All that was known about the interior of his residence was from some workmen who had been within, on one occasion, to do some repairs to a ceiling and the roof, and their report was that there were heavy locks and bolts on every door, that the rooms were barely furnished, and that the only conspicuous object they noticed in the place was a large iron chest, which was in the bedroom of the old man.

Gossip, of course, put this down as being the place where Grimaldi hoarded his wealth, nor was it far wrong, for he certainly did not give publicity to his riches by depositing his money in any of the banks, and, if it were true that he was so rich, there could be no doubt that the valuables were locked in that chest. It was noticed, too, that the old man, after his Genoese acquaintances arrived upon the scene, appeared to be very nervous, and was rarely to be seen abroad. There were, indeed, only two individuals with whom he mixed; one was a fellow townsman, to whose house he would occasionally go to dinner, in order to save the expense at home, and the other was a man named Fazio, a goldsmith, with whom Grimaldi had had business transactions. By all accounts, this worker of the precious metal was, in his way, as eccentric as the miser, and people declared that he was not right in his senses. His habits were strange, and he was looked upon by the ignorant as a man of supernatural power. He declared that he had almost perfected a process by which certain baser metals could be transformed to gold Certain it was, night after night his laboratory would be brilliantly lighted, and Fazio was known to be working with crucible and chemicals. At length he circulated the intelligence that he had solved the problem, and it was but a question of weeks before his process would be perfected.

But his friends only laughed at him. They were, however, before long to open their eyes at the sudden change which came over the somewhat indigent and hard-working goldsmith, which came about in so extraordinary a manner that it perplexed the good people of Pisa for many a year.

One night the wind was howling and the rain pelting down in torrents, whilst out at sea the lightning flashed and the thunder-claps were deafening. Old Grimaldi had been upon one of his visits to his friend to partake of supper, and, in spite of the dreadful state of the weather, he had refused to stay. Fearful of the safety of his riches, and too mean to order a carriage to convey him, he set out to walk across the town It was near midnight when he started through the storm, and the streets were deserted. On nearing the shop of his acquaintance, the goldsmith, he saw the lights burning, and it was evident that Fazio was still at work. So tremendous was the storm at this moment that he hesitated whether it would not be better for him to seek shelter after all. Just at the moment a figure emerged from a narrow street and advanced stealthily upon the miser, and with a poignard stabbed him in the back. It was a badly-delivered blow, for it struck the shoulder-blade and failed to do its deadly work immediately.

Grimaldi shouted for help, when the assassin, with a curse, made off. But the noise of the rain and thunder drowned the old man's voice, and nobody came. He had, however, strength enough to stagger to the goldsmith's shop and knock heavily upon the door with his stick. Fazio opened to him, and was dismayed at seeing his friend at that time in the morning, looking more like a spectre than a man, as the lightning flashed upon his pale, corpse-like face. Grimaldi would have fallen to the ground had not the goldsmith caught him and set him in a chair.

THE TERRIBLE POSITION FLASHED ACROSS HIS MIND.

"My God! they have killed me!" muttered the old man. "Ah! my money! my money, Fazio!" And he settled down down slowly all of a heap in the arm-chair.

Hardly knowing what to do—whether to shout for help or disturb the house—his terrible position flashed across his mind. He could tell by the old man's face that he was dead, and, hurriedly removing his coat, he found but a small quantity of blood upon his shirt. The dagger had entered one of the vessels, and he had bled inwardly. He was past all human aid, that was certain. What was to be done? In removing Grimaldi's garments he had felt a large bunch of keys, and now withdrew them from the pocket. The handling of them suggested a bold idea.

He was certain that nobody had seen the miser enter his premises. The storm which was still raging would prevent people being about. Why not? This was an act of providence, he argued to himself. He suspected, like most people, Grimaldi's wealth, and there were the keys to his house and the mysterious chest, without doubt. And his thoughts rambled on quickly.

"Yes," said he to himself; "this is extraordinary; it is an act of providence, without doubt. That such a terrible storm should come on this night; that I should be working in my shop; that Grimaldi should be stabbed and come to die in my chair; all this could not happen without a particular dispensation from above. He has no relation. One stranger is as good as another stranger, and Fazio is as good as another heir. I have even one right more. Had it not been for me he would have died in the street and would have lain in the wet all night. Who knows? perhaps he came to me in order to constitute me his heir!"

Threatens her husband with exposure.

And Fazio chuckled to himself, for visions of wealth were before him, and the very demon had entered his soul. He went on as he stood quietly looking down upon the doubled-up body of the old man in the arm-chair, "Ha, ha! His visit has supplied the place of a formal testament. I will quickly take the executorship upon me. Yes, that will be the wisest and the safest way. Fool should I be to do otherwise. If I were to relate the story to the magistrates I should not be believed. Grimaldi's body in my house—every man would accuse me of his murder. Truly, choice between the scaffold and a full coffer is not difficult. The assassin deserves to suffer, whilst I—what have I done? No harm. It is the Goddess Fortune smiling upon me. 'Cesare è motto più felice di Pompeio.' I am Cæsar! I have found what I have been so long hunting after. I have the philosopher's stone without the help of my cursed crucibles and my smoky 'heintzel'!"

Fazio was not long in making up his mind as to the disposal of the corpus delicti. He carried the poor, shrunken corpse of the miser into a large cellar under his premises, and there left it whilst he proceeded with the programme that he had so hurriedly made out for himself, determining on his return to dig a deep grave and there deposit the body, together with the keys—when he had used them—and the clothes, so that not a clue to his disappearance could be discovered. There was only one risk—that he might be seen leaving his home and visiting the old man's house. This was highly improbable, however, for Pisa was never at the best of times well policed, and the storm still continued to cover his movements; so he had little fear of meeting anybody in those early hours of the morning.

Providing himself with a dark lantern, and taking a long draught of full-bodied chianti wine to steady his nerves, he set forth upon the mission which, he felt confident, would place him in a state of affluence for the rest of his life.

Through the deluge of rain he hurried. Not a soul was about, and within a quarter of an hour he stood outside the miser's house, panting for breath and drenched with the rain. He had already selected the keys which appeared to be most likely to fit the lock of the street door, and was successful at almost the first effort. He was in the desolate house. Every door, however, had two or three locks, and it was some time before he was able to gain admittance to the room where the chest was placed. At length he had fitted the right key to the principal lock, but there were intricate arrangements to be dealt with before the contents of the miser's strong safe were revealed.

When the last bolt was drawn and the lid raised he was dazed at the sight before him. Drawer after drawer he pulled out, filled with gold rings, bracelets, jewels of priceless value, and other valuables. But that which riveted his attention most was a box containing four canvas bags, each of these marked "3,000 ducats."

Quivering with joy, he seized these bags and left untouched everything else contained in the iron safe. There could be no evidence against him with the gold. He would melt it down into bars that very night. Locking the chest and the doors after him, everything was left as when he entered, save for the removal of the bags of gold. He then made his way, staggering under the weight, to his home. Still the rain fell, the wind howled, and the thunder rumbled away in the distance. His "heintzel" (a furnace) was alight, and into some of his large crucibles he emptied the gold. Then he commenced his ugly work of digging in the cellar.

It was a long and tedious job, but he toiled with a supernatural strength, gained by the knowledge that his good fortune had favoured him, and that in the eyes of his fellow-townsmen he would no longer be looked down upon with contempt as a poor seeker after the impossible, but that he would be hailed as the greatest discoverer of the age.

Signor Fazio had at length discovered the philosopher's stone. He could make bars of gold. But how? Ah! that was his secret, and nobody should wring it from him.

All went well and not the slightest suspicion was aroused, for the goldsmith kept his secret so well that not even his wife knew of it. The gold, which was now melted into bars, was hidden in the cellar with his other secret, and he followed his ordinary routine of life, experimenting and burning the midnight oil, and keeping his furnaces still alight, denounced by everybody as a fool and a madman.

Weeks passed by, and nobody missed the miser, until the friend with whom he had supped on the memorable night of the storm not having seen him or heard from him, called at his house. Unable to gain admittance, he inquired in the neighbourhood, and learned that Grimaldi had not been seen for a considerable time, and that his prolonged absence from home had been frequently remarked. Suspicions were at once aroused, and the magistrates were applied to, and, after inquiries had been made, an order was issued to break in and search the premises.

This having been done, and there being no sign of anything disturbed, it was decided to break open the strong iron chest. After much difficulty, this was done by the locksmiths, in the presence of the magistrates. The jewels and other valuables were discovered and taken charge of by the State, but there was not the slightest indication of a disturbance of the contents of the safe, and, although it was remarked that there was no money, it was unreasonable to suppose that if anybody, by any possible chance, had gained access to the safe they would have left behind these stones of such great value.

The mysterious disappearance of the miser after his house had been searched was the talk of not only Pisa, but of half Italy, and, although large rewards were offered for the discovery of him or his body—presumably to be paid out of his

property—nothing was heard of him; neither did suspicion fall upon anybody. The mystery was, indeed, complete.

In the meanwhile Signor Fazio was carefully making his plans, and found it necessary to take his wife into his confidence. She had been away from Pisa for several months with her father in the country, accompanied by her two sons, the only children of her marriage, one aged six, the other eight years of age. She was adverse to returning to her husband, whose extraordinary operations in his laboratory had perplexed and annoyed her to a degree. However, when he seriously wrote to her that he had at last succeeded in completing his experiments, she, with many misgivings, came home.

The goldsmith took her quietly into his private room, and, throwing back the lid of a case, exposed to her bewildered eyes a magnificent ingot of pure gold. She was amazed, and fell upon his neck and praised him as much as she had formerly teased and reproached him for his waste of time.

Then, in a moment of weakness, he told his wife the truth of the whole business—told of how the miser had died, how he had obtained the wealth, and where his body lay. Horrified at the last intelligence, she was pacified when the new plans for their future life were put before her. It was quite certain that the house must never be given up. The first of the money realised by the sale of the ingots must be devoted to the purchase of the premises.

The next move was to gradually announce to the world that he had discovered the long-coveted secret, which was to make him the richest man in Italy. At first his statement as to the discovery was discredited. Then to a few friends he showed the ingot, and declared that he was setting forth on a journey to Marseilles, and thence to Paris, in order to have its purity valued and turn it into coin of the realm. Not one believed him. They declared that the ingot was not gold, but counterfeit, shown them to deceive them or for the purpose of raising money. Fazio, the goldsmith, was either a rogue or a fool, and they laughed and jeered at him.

He endeavoured to borrow money for his journey, purposely pretending that he was all but destitute, and that his secret and the ingot was all he possessed in the world. But his acquaintances would have none of it. At length he sold a little farm he had in the country at a great sacrifice, and with the money he raised prepared for his journey. At this he was opposed by all his family, and his wife, who also pretended that she did not wish him to go on what everybody deemed a fool's errand, played her part admirably.

When he had gone madame pleaded poverty and everybody sympathised with her and showed her the greatest pity.

Fazio, in the meanwhile, lost no time. His gold was assayed and the ingots were turned into good bills of exchange on the first bankers of Pisa, and he wrote to his wife, telling of his success and immediate return. She intentionally spread the news, and when, through the banks, it became known that the goldsmith was really a wealthy man the astonishment was tremendous. He returned to his native town with a triumphant air, and related the success with which his chemical labours had been crowned to the whole world. The story was told from house to house, and Signor Fazio was no longer regarded as the fool and striver after the impossible, but was looked upon with mixed feelings of awe and envy for having obtained this unique knowledge in the occult science of the transmutation of metals.

There was now no need to conceal his wealth. He kept a large establishment in the country, and they lived a life of luxury. The signora and her husband rode horseback and became surrounded by many rich and fashionable friends, whilst pleasure of every description was indulged in. But it was not to last for any great length of time. Within twelve months events crowded one upon the other with such rapidity that an end was come to all the gaiety and a tragedy enacted which is perhaps unparalleled in the history of crime.

Signor Fazio, in the course of his gay life, became enamoured of a beautiful girl, and made her his mistress. Stung to madness by jealousy, the signora threatened her husband with exposure. He laughed at her and defied her, feeling that she never would be so rash as to divulge the secret and let the world know how they had become possessed of their riches. He little knew, though, what a mad, jealous woman will do. The fiery, hot Italian blood of the woman gave her no peace, and, failing to regain the affection of her husband, she determined to expose him.

It will be unnecessary to dwell upon the effects of the blow that was struck. Without reflecting on the melancholy consequences, she declared before the magistrate that her husband was the murderer of Grimaldi, and that his body would be found in the cellar of their house in Pisa.

Fazio was dreaming away delicious moments in the arms of his fair one when his furious wife took this rash step, and he had little thought of the storm that was gathering around his head. At once a search was made, the body found, and Fazio seized from the arms of his mistress and thrown into prison. The evidence was overwhelming, and, although he at first denied the charge, he was compelled to confess his part in the unhappy business. His last interview with his wife was when she stood before him in the courts of justice as his accuser, when he exclaimed, "Wretch as thou art, had I loved thee less thou wouldst not have been entrusted with my secret. I was weak from my love towards thee, and thou hast brought me hither!"

Fazio was condemned to suffer death in the principal place in Pisa. Nothing could save him. When his wife returned from the trial it was to find that everything—her house, her jewels, and furniture—had been seized by the justices and a seal put upon everything. She was a beggar and her two little boys outcasts. Criminal as the man was, the woman for her perfidy was scorned by all who knew her, and she had not a soul to go to or to pity her in her distress.

It is said that the woman was for days wandering about the streets in a frantic mood. The stings of conscience already wrung her heart. Her revenge being satiated, she saw her rashness, and pain and remorse arose to their height. She fought to get into the courts of justice to beg the judge to pardon her husband and to declare that she had lied, but she was rudely and roughly thrust back. There were the ghastly though silent witnesses against Fazio—the remains of the miser and his keys buried in the cellar.

Here is an extract from a report which I have translated, and which refers to the unhappy woman's condition after the conviction of her miserable husband:

"She went about the city a raving maniac. The sight of her children redoubled the pangs of her soul. The whole city resounded with the melancholy event, for, having delivered her husband up to the executioner, she became a horror to herself, and had not even the poor consolation of exciting compassion. Relations and acquaintances hated and avoided her as if she were a ravenous beast."

The last scene of all came with sudden and terrible swiftness. There is a description before me of a most imposing spectacle of the man being led through the principal streets of Pisa, walking firmly amidst the silence of the mob, for, guilty as he undoubtedly was, the unnatural behaviour of his wife had excited pity to an extent for him.

He ascended the steps of the scaffold— a square, wooden structure, some six feet from the ground—with a firm step, and, before suffering the last penalty of the law, he stepped forward and addressed the vast multitude surrounding him. In solemn tones he avowed his innocence of the murder, and cursed the impetuous jealousy of his wife.

He was executed, and his body lay, as was the custom, upon a bier upon the scaffold, draped with black cloth, as a terror for the populace to behold.

The crowd was breaking up when a woman with pale face and wild eyes made her way quickly and silently towards the scaffold. By each hand she led a young boy. It was Signora Fazio, with her two children. Before those in charge or the people who were lingering around the scene of the execution could stop her, she had quickly mounted the steps, and bade the children kneel beside the corpse of their father and embrace it. The quick action of the woman, the wails of the crying boys and the dramatic scene presented paralysed the spectators.

Then a cry of universal horror and dismay went up to the skies. Suddenly the raging mother drew a poignard and plunged it into the breast of one of her children, then, turning to the other, buried the bloody weapon into the heart of his brother. There was a rush to the scaffold, but before a soul could interfere she had struck herself with the same dagger and fell lifeless.

The terrible tragedy was enacted so quickly that it struck horror and terror to all. The sensation created was dreadful, and the hardest hearts melted with pity.

The bodies of the father and the mother were by special privilege allowed to be interred in a place outside the walls and not dealt with by the authorities, whilst those of the two children were placed in the graveyard of St. Catherine, whilst the tradition of this awful event has been preserved to the present day, and is, I am assured, frequently related there, even now, after all these years, with pathetic concern.

MURDERERS' LETTERS.

CLOSE to me lives a gentleman who has one of the oddest collections in the world. He has acquired at different times—and with much trouble and expense—an assortment of letters written by notorious criminals, the majority of whom have been hanged for murder. He has over two hundred of these interesting epistles, ranging from a note sent to his solicitor in court by Tawell, the Quaker, hanged for poisoning his paramour in 1845, to a postcard sent by Dougal from the Moat Farm asking a certain medical gentleman resident near "to drop in and take pot luck with him!" I am not aware if Dr. S. accepted this sinister invitation.

That faded letter he hands you—the writing is small and scratchy, though still legible—was written by George Frederick Manning, ex-railway guard, publican, broker, and murderer. "Dear Charles," it begins, "I am sorry to have failed you that day, but the missis was ill." In this careless and irreverent way does he refer to that modern Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Manning, as determined and unrepentant a murderess as our criminal history can show. My friend likewise possesses a confession signed by Manning, that criminal having a partiality for writing "confessions," each of which masterpieces contradicted the other, and were only consistent in their endeavours to fix the guilt upon the woman. Cowardly person, Mr. G. F. Manning!

Percy Lefroy Mapleton had a fancy for writing absurd love letters to actresses, and here is one to Miss Kate Santley: "To admire you from afar is bliss divine; what would it be to merely call you mine?" He was a minor poet as well as a murderer was the romantic Percy, and wrote the book of the pantomime (1879-1880) for the Theatre Royal, Croydon.

Deeming's letter, like that of the Moat Farm miscreant, is couched in the hospitable terms of the "bon garçon," the "viveur," the "bon soldat du plaisir!" It is dated from a temperance hotel at Rainhill, and is written to "Dear Mr. Swann." The murderer is anxious for Mr. S. to join him at dinner with a few particular friends at the —— Hotel. "You know," he says, "just a few of the best lads, and a song afterwards." "Order," he writes thoughtfully, "some headache powders for the next morning." Kind, hospitable, ever friendly fellow this Deeming, or rather Williams, as he signed himself at that time!

A few lines, badly written and expressed, from William Godfrey Youngman, applying to a tailor in Camberwell for a job "as cutter," are not without interest—I think this young gentleman was a tailor, by the way—and particularly appeal to me, since I have always thought that callous young slaughterer of his mother, sweetheart, and brothers about the worst and bloodiest murderer this country has ever known. There is in this weird collection a postcard from Bennett, of Yarmouth notoriety, and a letter-card sent to an estate-agent by Edgar Edwards, or Owen, this last being extremely well written and well worded.

My friend possesses no less than three letters written by the infamous Dr. Palmer, in a small, but neat hand. Two of these productions refer to betting transactions, and one explains what, in the writer's judgment, caused Nettle's accident in the Epsom Oaks.

A letter, clumsily written, by Hannah Dobbs, in 1879, makes a reference to the charge against her of having murdered Miss Hacker, in Euston Square, and in this interesting and instructive communication this woman plainly states whom she believed the murderer to be. There is a long letter mainly on religious subjects written by that strange character, Constance Kent, and, of course, the inevitable "Ripper" letter, this being one of those numerous epistles which were addressed to the police during the scare of 1888.

"That one I retain," said the collector, "though I believe it to be a clever forgery." It purported to come from Henry Wainwright, and its contents need not be indicated here. Another letter recalled the Hampstead murder of '45. This was written by a youth who addressed letters to Hocker while the latter lay under sentence of death, in which the writer confessed that he was really the murderer of Mr. Delarue, and stated that he would give himself up before the day of his—Hocker's—execution. I may add that this young fool was apprehended, and that it was conclusively established that he had nothing whatever to do with the murder in Belsize Lane, though it is probable that someone—never discovered—assisted Hocker in that fell enterprise.

A badly-scrawled line from Mullins, ex-policeman and the murderer of Mrs. Elmsley at Stepney, is the last I need refer to. It is addressed to his solicitor, and alludes to the line of defence, an alibi, but Mullins was undoubtedly guilty, and was hanged.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Both Right.

MAGISTRATE (to prisoner, who has a beautiful black eye): "At any rate, it seems pretty clear that you first assaulted the prosecutor."

Prisoner: "He said I was a liar, sir."

Prosecutor: "And he called me a lazy lout."

Magistrate (pouring oil on troubled waters): "Well, why fight over a difference of opinion like that? You are probably both right."

Discharged!

A Would-be Irving.

A WELL-KNOWN actor-manager once received an extremely quaint application for an engagement at his West-End theatre.

"I should like to go on the stage," said the writer, "and I feel sure that you would find me suitable for leading parts. I should only want a small salary to commence. I enclose you a newspaper cutting, to show you that I have a natural aptitude for the stage."

The cutting read: "The prisoner, who denied the assault, conducted his own case, and defended himself in rather a dramatic manner."

Called into Court.

THE next witness was a simple country lassie, one Janet Jardine. The following conversation then ensued between this bashful damsel and the kindly magistrate:

Magistrate: "My good girl, don't be afraid, and speak up. I understand that you were near the spot and saw the prisoner at the bar. Were you alone?"

Witness: "No, sir. Bill—that is my sweetheart—was with me at the time."

Magistrate: "Just so. Courting, I suppose? Is he here now?"

Witness: "He be a-waiting for me outside."

Magistrate: "Call him into court."

Witness: "Oh, la, my lord, don't 'ee do that! Why, he was a'most too shy to court me alone, and I am sure he won't do it in front of these folks!"

REPLIES TO QUERIES

MELVILLE.—If a man commits a sensational murder, he is generally credited with many others. The lady in question did act as barmaid to Chapman at one time, but he was not "interested" in her and so she is, happily, still in the land of the living.

MRS. N. (Acton).—Oh! you ladies. He was acquitted. It is kind of you to suggest that what we want is a "rattling good libel action." Some Editors achieve libels, like greatness; and others have libels thrust upon them. We'll try to do without that kind of advert.

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